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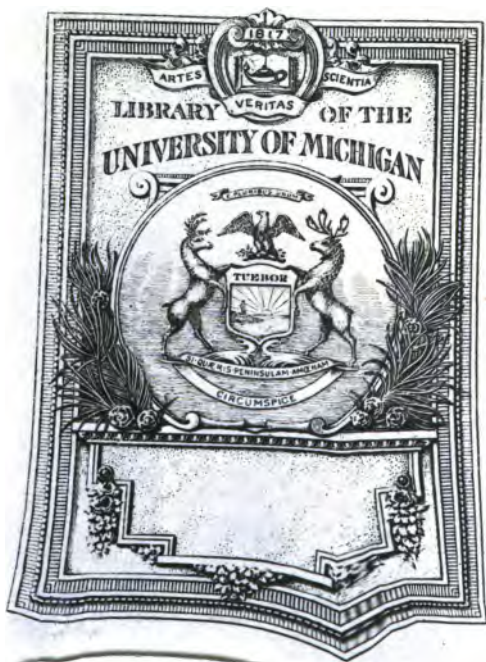
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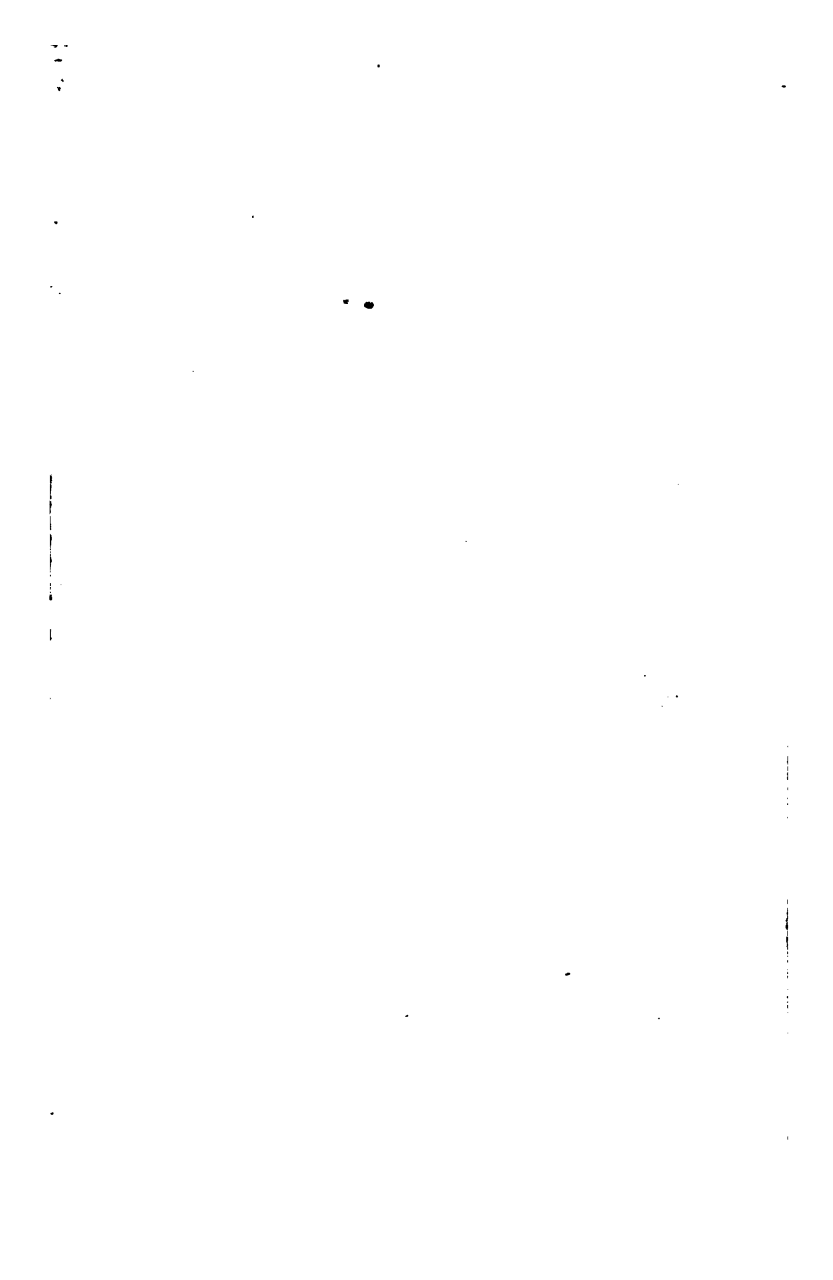
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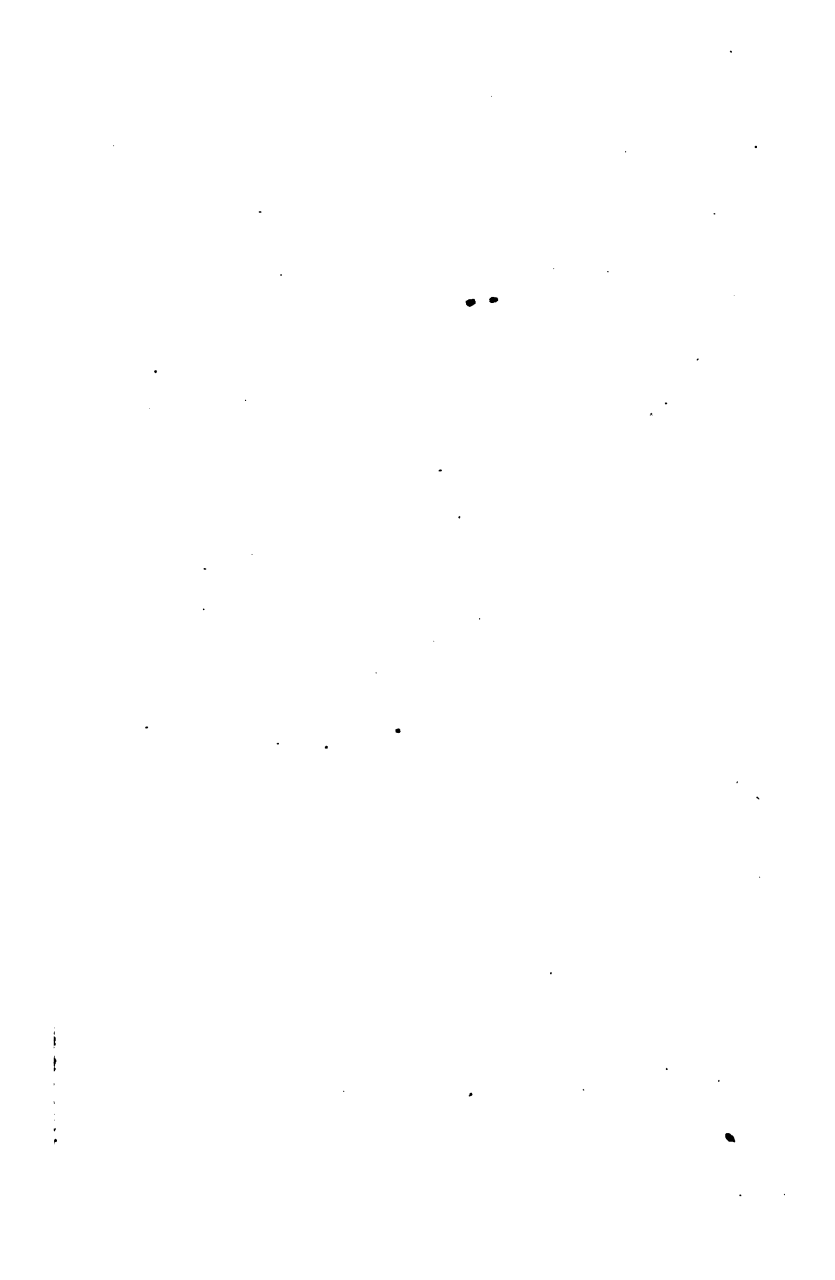


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**SOCIAL EVILS,**

**AND**

**THEIR REMEDY.**





# SOCIAL EVILS,

AND

Their Remedy.

BY

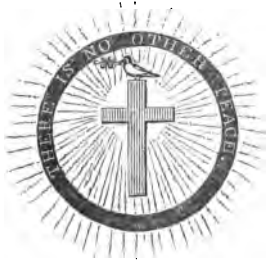
THE REV. CHARLES E. TAYLER, M. A.

"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

"The kingdom of God is like leaven."

VOL. I.

THE MECHANIC.  
THE LADY AND THE LADY'S MAID.



LONDON:

SMITH, ELDER AND CO. CORNHILL.

1837.

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD BEXLEY,

THE ENLIGHTENED AND CONSISTENT ADVOCATE OF

WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE TRUE,

WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE HONEST,

WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE JUST,

WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE PURE,

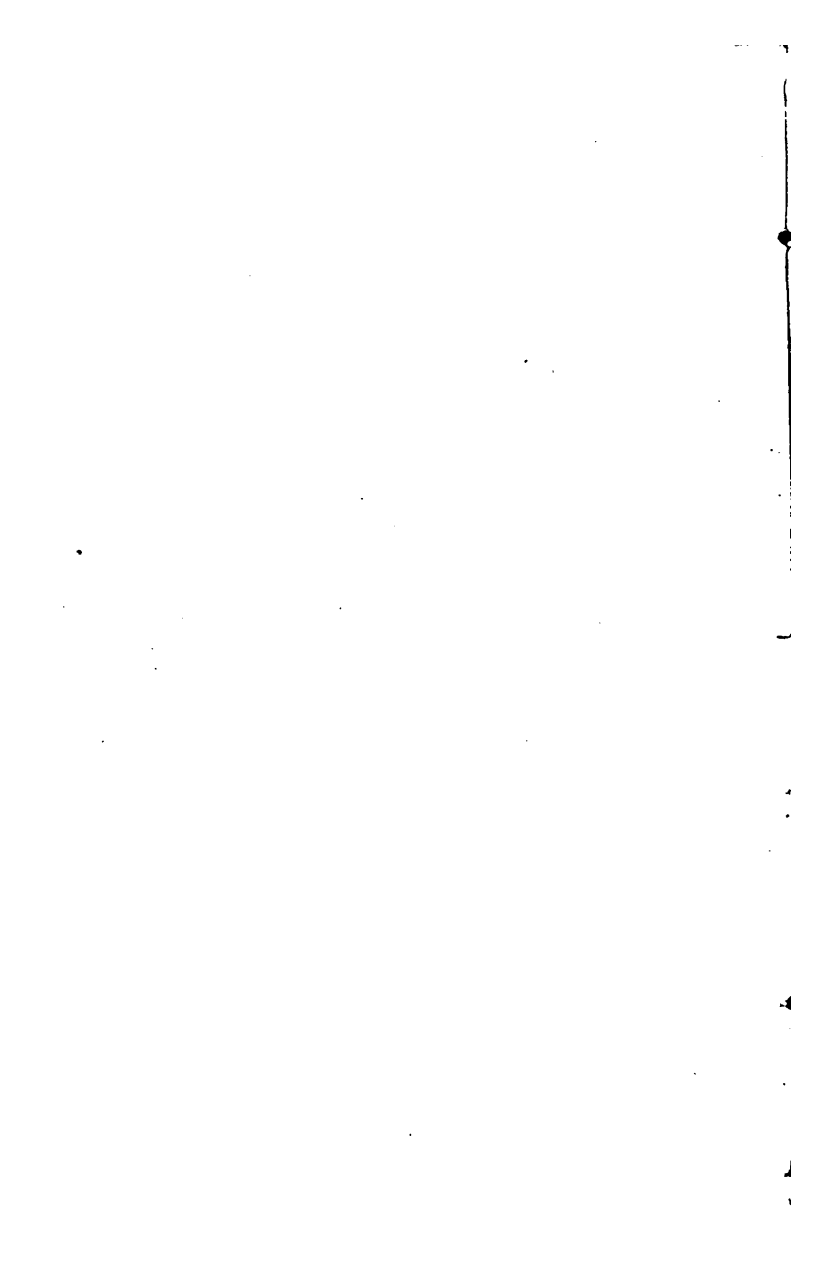
WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE LOVELY,

WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE OF GOOD REPORT;

THIS WORK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY HIS GRATEFUL FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.





English  
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## ADDRESS.

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I AM not a politician, nor do I belong to any political party : my own station is a country parish, and I seldom pass its boundaries. However, in the Periodical Work I am now publishing, I would go forth through the land on a mission of high importance, holding up the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as the great remedy of Social Evils. I hope to be admitted into many a household circle, and to be allowed at least a hearing. My mission relates not only to the happiness of "the life that now is," but to the highest interests of man,—to the life and death of the immortal spirit; and I do not come as a trifler, but as one bearing and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God.

I do not meddle with the question, whether the Gospel is, or is not, the remedy for evils in the organization of society; but I do assert, that it will introduce a new spirit even into a badly organized society, and thus make it superior to the most admirable organization without that spirit.

As it is with the human body, so it is with the body politic. It is not the province or proper office of religion to restore to symmetry and to beauty the deformed figure, but to introduce the graces of a renewed spirit within that deformed figure, and thus to impart even to the unshapen, and the coarse featured, a charm for which we may vainly search, where the proportions of the form are in exquisite symmetry, and the features beautiful, if that spirit is not present.

It is not my proper office, as a Pastor of Christ's flock, to point out the faults and the remedy in the organization of the body politic. Perhaps I am not blinder than others to those faults, and, perhaps, many others, no better fitted than myself for

2-15-47 GKS

## ADDRESS.

the office, would do well to leave the work to wiser heads and better hands than their own.

I am not at all disposed to undervalue the science of political economy, nor to assert that many of the popular views of political economists are not right views, many of their plans, right plans; but I would have political economy kept to its proper place, and in its proper department; and I must lift up my voice, however feeble it may be, against the cant of a party, that would propose to remedy every evil, by ways which are founded neither on sound philosophy nor common sense.

I would direct the attention of my reader to the remedy provided by God himself, for evils which neither the laws of our country, nor the laws of society can reach; and here I would, therefore, repeat, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ in its pure and holy simplicity, is the remedy for the thousand evils, which are *effects* to the real *cause* of all misery and suffering, — that *cause* is *sin*.

If we propose to reform society, we begin at the wrong end, if we begin *merely* with the great body. We must begin with the individual; for any body of men is made up of a certain number of individuals. Again, not only is it necessary in order to reform a body of individuals, to begin with the separate individual, but in order to reform the individual, it is absolutely necessary to begin with his heart. This is the peculiar province of the Christian Pastor, as being the commission of Him whose demand of every man is, "My son, give me thy heart," and who has graciously added, "a new heart will I give you."

*Hodnet, 1834.*

## THE MECHANIC ;

OR,

REUBEN FORSTER'S ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF.

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“ Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”

JEREMIAH vi. 16.

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MY name is Reuben Forster, and Birmingham is my native place. I am the only son of an honest man, a christian of an old-fashioned school, but none the worse for that. He was not a man of many words, nor was he much occupied with the religious peculiarities, or the irreligious practices of his neighbours, finding quite enough to do in keeping his own conscience void of offence towards God and man, and in walking in a straight-forward and upright way himself. God bless him ! The remembrance of what he was to me, and of what I lost in losing him, always makes me bless him as if he were still alive on earth. My mother died a week after my birth, so that I knew nothing of her ; and I was given to the care of a faithful, but

not very wise creature, an aunt of my mother's, whom my father took into his house on the death of her husband. She had been still-room maid, and afterwards waiting gentlewoman, in the service of my Lady Templeton, in Cheshire; and, on the death of her mistress, she married the old butler, who was a drunkard, and would have broken her heart, had he not, in the mean time, fallen down a steep flight of stone steps, and broken his own neck. My father was very kind to poor aunt Merridew, and never felt disposed to quarrel with her, but when she gave way to tears and piteous lamentations over her widowed state, knowing, as he did, that her husband gave her some reason for crying in his lifetime; still, as I have heard him say, after passing rather a rough censure on her weeping, "You know, aunt Merridew, you were always a tender baggage, and I suppose I'm wrong to find fault with you, for I think you would be miserable without having something to be lackadaisycal about, and to lament over. I'm glad enough you find nothing to distress you under my roof."

But enough of this. My father was a watch and clock maker, and had a good business, to which he brought me up; and though we lived in a back-street in the town of Birmingham, and had no show in our window but an old Dutch dial of tarnished brass, and though I say it, who should not say it, we had as much, and more business, than we could do; and, what with new time-pieces

of our own manufacture, and second-hand clocks for sale, and those of our customers that were left to be repaired, there was as rare a sight, and as pleasant a din kept up to the eye and ear, in our shop, as in any of all Birmingham. My father and my old aunt died within a week the one of the other, and the shock upset me terribly at first, so that though I sat down to work, as usual, the day after the last funeral, my hot tears dropped into the works of Counsellor Broderip's gold watch, which I had taken to clean, and had well nigh done much mischief. I found that I could not go back to work again, so soon, in that now desolate shop; so, after putting all to rights again, as well as I could, I locked up my tools and my watches, and walked into the kitchen. The fire had gone out, and my aunt's favourite cat sat upright in her usual place, the middle of the hearth-stone, looking, to my sight, as dull as myself; her tail was drawn close under her, and she sat staring at the empty grate. However, on my throwing myself into one of the arm-chairs, she sprung up into my lap, a thing I had never known her do before, for she was an old cat of very orderly habits. I might have taken a lesson from the poor animal, who seemed so ready to make the best of a desolate change, and to seek comfort where it was yet to be found, but I did not. I sat, gloomy and lost, for hour after hour; and though my father's bible lay within arm's length of me, upon the walnut-tree

bureau, I had not a care to open it, thus neglecting to follow his good example; for, in trouble and in joy, morning, noon, and night, would he take down that book, and give whatever time he could spare to the study of it; and it seemed to me that he never spoke so wisely, or so kindly, as when he rose up from reading the Holy Bible.

At last I was roused from my gloom by a ring at the door bell, or, I should say, a ring several times repeated. I heard it, without attending to the sound at first. I found Mary Armstrong, a kinswoman of my father, and a farmer's wife, at the door. "I tell thee what," she said, as she put down her large covered basket, and, after staring me in the face, turned a searching look round the room, "I tell thee what, lad! thou shalt come and pass a day or two with us at Castle Bromwich, in the old farm-house. The master will be right glad to see thee, and if younger company should be wanted, there's John, and Jem, and Margaret, all at home. Our clock, too, is sadly out of order, and, as it was the first your father, that's now dead and buried, ever made, we set great store by it."

I got my neighbour Pritchard's son to sleep in the house, and gave the key to his mother, (the Pritchards are as honest a family as ever broke bread,) and I went with my kinswoman, though, I must confess, half unwillingly. I liked my visit so well, that I repeated it often from Saturday

evening till Monday morning, leaving home late, and returning early. The reason of my frequent visits will be plain enough, when I say, that about a year and a month after my poor father's death, I brought home Margaret Armstrong as my wife. She was rather a homely damsel, but worth her weight in gold, to a husband who needed a thrifty, cleanly, cheerful partner. She had had but little schooling, I mean in scholarship, for she was a slow reader even in the Bible, and she wrote a clumsy hand enough ; but she was always kind and attentive to me, loved to stay at home, and "studied to be quiet and to mind her own business." She had been brought up as farmers' daughters used to be—in her own sphere of life, and she was an ornament to it, for what she wanted in learning and outside show, was made up in plain good sense and industry. She had a will of her own, which was shown, not in acting contrary to my wishes, but in having the courage to speak out plainly and yet gently, when she thought me wrong, and advising me for my good ; and though, when she differed from me, I was often hasty and angry, I scarcely ever thought over her advice coolly, without approving every word she had said. After my marriage I began to know the comforts of having taken such a wife as Margaret Armstrong, to be my housekeeper. Poor aunt Merridew had been clean and decent, but she did every thing in a sort of fiddle-faddle way. Margaret made the fur-

niture shine like glass, washed the linen as white as snow, and even scrubbed the boards till they looked as sweet and clean as her churn and milk-pail at the farm; and she did every thing without a fuss. In short, she knew what she ought to do, and did what she knew. About a year after our marriage my wife brought me a little girl. Our neighbour, Pritchard, told me she never wished to see a finer babe. Poor Margaret had a sharp time with the child, being near two days in labour, and she was weakly for some months afterwards; so we all thought that a visit to The Maples, for so they called my kinsman's farm, might do her a great deal of good, and her brother John brought the spring-cart and fetched her and the baby away, I promising to go over to the farm on the Saturdays, as I had done in the days of my courtship. A day or two after my wife's departure, a man came to my shop to have a new glass fixed in his watch. I was very busy at the time about a very delicate job, and he offered, good-naturedly enough, to sit down for five minutes and wait till I could attend to him. He took a bit of paper out of his pocket and began reading it, at least every now and then, a bit, where the observations seemed to strike him. What he read was very abusive against the present order of things in church and state; indeed, it seemed to spare neither men nor measures. Once or twice I turned round and said, "Your book, my friend! seems no great shakes, for



it reads for all the world like the talking of a man ready to burst with his own venom."—"It's very clever though, isn't it?" he said; "and, believe me, there's a deal of truth in it."—"Why, to be sure," I replied, "I suppose the writer may be clever in a way, and so is a black gentleman you and I need not mention; but as for the truth of what he says, I shall say nothing, because I know next to nothing of the things and the persons he writes about."—"But my good friend!" said the stranger, rising up, and coming close to me, and staring me in the face, "you ought to know much about those things and persons, for, let me tell you, mechanic as you are, you are called upon to have a voice in the affairs of your country. You ought to raise your arm against oppression, and we are slaves in many more ways than the West-Indian negro, in this same country of England." He went on in this way for a length of time, and I, like a great gowk, began to think at last that there was some reason in his arguments; for he managed to mix up plenty of the honey of flattery to me, with his attacks and insinuations against others. As he went away, he threw down, what seemed to me a play-bill, on my board, and said, "Look that over, and if you can shake off prejudice, go and hear what they have to say for themselves. I looked over the paper in the course of the evening, but found it was no play-bill. It was, in fact, a sort of invitation to a chapel or place of as-

sembly (for a chapel I won't call it), and it stated that the meeting would be held for a limited number of nights at No. 24, — street, when a lecture would be delivered by a gentleman from London, and that at the end of the lecture, any lady or gentleman would be permitted to address the company for the space of ten minutes, or to propose any questions (which might need answering) to the lecturer. I twisted up the paper and lighted my candle with it soon after I had read it, and I never thought for a moment of going to the place it mentioned. I had not even troubled my head about the man that brought it, but he called again, and a smartly-dressed young woman was leaning on his arm : two other women, quite as smart, accompanied them. " Come in, Mrs. Philips," he said, turning to the elder of the two women who followed him and his companion Miss Smith, " this is the gentleman who put a glass to your sister's watch. I am sure he will be proud and happy to attend to your commands." Mrs. Philips, who was a tall woman, with a very ordinary sallow face, but dressed out in a shot-silk pelisse and a lace collar, and a bunch of mock-flowers in her bonnet, and her hair all puffed out in bows about her face, came forwards with a sort of sideling walk, and a sneering simper on her face, and, taking a watch from her bosom, which hung there by a gilt chain, she put it into my hands. The watch was a very old-fashioned one, in a shagreen case, and when I opened it, I

saw engraved on the back — ‘H. Merridew.’ “Curious enough!” I said, “my aunt was a Merridew!” — “Why, dear me! was she?” said Mrs. Philips, “and so was my mother!” — “Ay! but all her husband’s family lived in London, as I’ve often heard her say.” — “Odd enough!” said Mrs. Philips, whose tone was now very friendly and familiar, “we are from London, at least from Spa Fields: we lived in Rose-tree Walk, not far from Bagnigge Wells, and we have not resided in Birmingham above two years.” We found out, after a little more conversation, that we were distantly connected, but Mrs. Philips called me cousin from that time. The very next morning, Mr. Wade, for that was the stranger’s name, brought me an invitation from Mrs. Smith to drink tea with their family party that evening. He made himself very pleasant, and told me that he was engaged to Miss Smith, the eldest unmarried sister; and adding, that the ladies had made him promise to bring back a favourable answer from me to the invitation, leaving it to me, if that evening was not agreeable, to fix any other in the week. I went to tea at Mrs. Smith’s, and found a large party, all very chatty, and all smartly dressed. Mrs. Smith herself struck me, at first, as having a bad look with her, and I thought she smelt of spirits; but she had a deal to say, and seemed as lively and good-humoured as any of her daughters. She made me sit next her, and asked me all sorts of questions, and told me that they had

met with many misfortunes, and that poor Mrs. Philips's was a melancholy history, left a widow at such an early age. (I afterwards found that Mrs. Smith had kept a noted bad house, and that the widowhood of Mrs. Philips was caused by the departure of Mr. Philips, alias Richard Poulter, alias Dick Barclay, a pickpocket and sharper, well known in Bow-street, for New South Wales.) The friendly communications of Mrs. Smith were interrupted, by Mrs. Philips calling over to me in a loud, but measured voice, "Mr. Forster, can you lend me a volume of Byron's Poems; for since his lordship's death, I must say I feel a great interest in the productions of his gifted pen." I stared again at the question, and the language in which it was put; and I told her I did not think I had a book of poems in the house, unless it might be a pocket edition of Thomson's Seasons, which had been my aunt Merridew's, and that she was welcome to that. There was card-playing and dancing after tea, and a hot supper: but I must own, that before the evening was over, I felt ashamed of my company, and was glad to steal away, and get quietly to bed in my own comfortable chamber. The next day was Saturday, and I set off at an early hour for The Maples, and found my dear wife much better, and the baby thriving, and I sat down in the chimney corner, among the honest family, as happy as any great lord in the land. We all went to church, morning

and evening, and my father-in-law read a chapter in the large Bible after supper, and offered up a very fine prayer, from an old book they had had in use many years, and we were all a-bed and asleep before the clock struck ten.

I don't know how it was, but I did not like to tell my wife much about Mrs. Philips and the Smiths; I merely said I had met with some relations of my poor aunt Merridew; and Margaret replied; "Well, Reuben, and I hope you paid them all due civility."

My intimacy with the Smiths continued, or I should say, increased. I could not approve their ways in many respects, but they used to flatter me up; and I got into a habit of passing my evenings with them; and I believe others, as well as myself, know what a hold a bad habit soon gets. I heard a great deal about the advanced state of society, and particularly from Mr. Wade and Mrs. Philips; but the upshot of everything they said seemed to be, to confuse all the good old-fashioned notions of right and wrong, that I had grown up in the reverence of, and, for a time, they succeeded in producing a very pretty confusion within me. Mrs. Smith did not seem up to their flights; she was contented with the study of a well-thumbed, greasy novel, and was accustomed to take what she called her drops for certain spasms which she was subject to. However, she well knew what number of drops to take without mea-

suring them; for I observed that she generally poured, not dropped the liquid out of a green bottle which she kept locked up in a corner cupboard behind her. Mr. Wade openly laughed at churches and chapels, and at all the institutions which I had been used to look upon as excellent and sacred. "I do not find fault with them in one sense," he would say;—"they were all very well in times past! but the spirit of the age is beyond them now, my good friend! I was brought up with as many prejudices as any body; but now I cannot help smiling at my deplorable, nay, almost childish ignorance. I don't say that the Bible has any thing about it to harm you, unless it be its tendency to keep the mind of man, when full grown to its glorious maturity, fettered by the leading-strings of ignorance and barbarism!" But here he broke off, and, looking at his watch, "We are walking together," he said, "to our friend, Mrs. Smith's, but I quite forgot to tell you that the younger ladies do not drink tea till an hour later than usual this evening. The old mother is at home alone, and your friend, Mrs. Philips, begged me to bring you to our chapel: the lecturer is only to be here another week. What distinguishes our party is this," he continued, as we walked forward—"a kindness and tolerance towards all others as extraordinary as our devotion to pure truth. We smile a little certainly sometimes at the errors of the uninitiated; but

smiles, you know, are gentle weapons." I heard these sentiments expanded and dwelt upon at the assembly by the popular lecturer, whose words were very oily, to a crowd of gaping listeners, many of them mere boys, most of them journeymen with unwashed faces, who had just turned out from the manufactories. The Old Testament, he told us, was well suited to the state of human society when it appeared, and the New Testament was even superior to it in many essential respects; and for mankind, as things were two thousand years ago, perhaps a better book could not have been produced. "But for the present state of society," he continued, "we need a more enlightened system! a purer morality! Things must be new modelled, and, though it is the interest of juggling priests, and time-serving statesmen, to keep you in the dark, stand forth and stand firm, my fellow-citizens, and claim what is your own by your free birthright. Shall freemen go to slaves for laws? Shall—" but I am sure I cannot recollect any more that I heard from this celebrated lecturer. When he had done with his speech, another rose up, not a man, but a woman; and judge of my astonishment, when I beheld the sallow face of Mrs. Philips—sallow I say, for, though I felt my own face grow as red as fire, not even a passing blush was to be seen on hers. She was not at all shamefaced even at first, but she spoke in rather a low voice; and, when a man at the end of the

room called out, "Come, speak up, missis," and a few others laughed, she did get a little red, and she dropt down her eyelids, and asked for a glass of water. Upon which, one or two persons, feeling for her, and taking her part, cried out, "Shame!" However, she soon plucked up her voice and her courage, and spoke out as loud as you please; and a deal of fine talk she made, sometimes pressing her hand over her heart, and she spouted some verses from the "immortal Byrom," as she called him, or "Byron" whichever it is; for she had borrowed a volume or two of his writings from a new acquaintance she had made, a Mr. Dorville, a good-looking stripling who had just served his time with Messrs. Pike and Trencher, the linen-draper in the street where she lived. I asked Mr. Wade, after the meeting was over, if Mrs. Philips had never been a play-actress, for it struck me she had; and then Mr. Wade told me in confidence, that she had been brought up for the stage, and had been, when a girl, a famous dancer on the slack rope, but he begged that this might go no further.\*—Now that all my love for the absurd notions and ways of Mr. Wade and Mrs. Philips, and the whole set of them has died away, and, I trust, left me for ever, I can write

\* Her secret fondness for the theatre peeped out before many weeks were over her head, for she and Mr. Dorville went off with a party of strolling players, and the last time I heard of them they were both acting together in the Wood Dæmon, at one of the theatres in Bartholomew fair.



coolly about them; and as I write, I do indeed wonder at myself, that I should ever have suffered myself to be made such a fool of, and to be so blinded by folly, as daring as it was sinful. But for a time I could think of nothing else—there's no use telling a lie about it!—I began to feel myself intended for great things. I thought that my proper place was among the senate of my country, to assist in framing new and more enlightened laws, or I would even have consented to occupy the pulpit of the largest church at Birmingham to preach a new and pure religion to the dark and grovelling worshippers (so I termed them) there. I held forth to the party at Mrs. Smith's on these subjects, and was thought a fine speaker. I possessed, in fact, what to a man of shallow brains is a very dangerous possession, a great fluency of speech, or, to use very vulgar, though very expressive language, the gift of the gab! and the very circumstance of my making the discovery, made me, for a time, anxious to seek every opportunity of showing off my fine speaking. I attended the lecture constantly, and, more than once, I was so silly as to address the assembly afterwards. The departure of the lecturer put a stop to our public meetings; but I was so vain of my speaking, and so desirous of making a display of it, that I began to plan with Mr. Wade about hiring a large house for the same purpose in N—— street, proposing that he and I should become lecturers

there. He agreed with delight to my proposal, and talked with much animation of the great and moral benefit which we should confer on mankind, and more particularly on our own neighbourhood; and then he told me in confidence that he was about to set up a stationer's shop on his marriage with Miss Smith, and offered to pay me a handsome rent for the lower frontage of the house in N—— street, which I intended to engage as our place of assembly. He concluded with asking, in a careless manner, if I could accommodate him with the loan of fifty pounds as he proposed going to London to buy stock for his new shop; adding, in confidence, "I am to receive five hundred pounds, and two freehold tenements on my marriage with Euphemia Smith, and I shall pay you, my good friend, the day after the wedding." I told him I was highly gratified by his confidence, and very readily lent him the money. We spent the evening at Mrs. Smith's, and a very pleasant evening it was. I was no longer ashamed of my company, as I had been on a former occasion. I had grown accustomed to things which I could not approve before, or, rather, I had found it convenient to wink at them, and excuse them to myself. I was even offended and hurt at finding that Mrs. Philips paid more attention to Mr. Dorville, the young linen-draper, than to me. Nay, to my astonishment, she seemed to have cooled about our opinions in religion and

politics, and sat like a very woman, talking about novels and play-books, with her young beau ; and young, indeed, he was to her, and very fresh-looking, though near six feet in height. Before that evening, Mrs. Philips had always singled me out ; and though I had not cared much about her, yet her flattery and attention had been far from unpleasant. I was very angry when I saw that she could think of no one but the young draper, and I went and sat next her, and while I made, now and then, a spiteful remark, which I intended for her young companion, I paid her several compliments. " When does your wife come home, Mr. Forster ? " she said, addressing herself to me, at supper ; " I suppose, when you leave off living a bachelor, you will not come among us quite so often. Mr. Dorville tells me he hears you are a married man. " I did not make any reply, but I knew that she had been well aware that I was a married man many weeks before. I had heard her often express her contempt for what she called the unjust and hated fetters of matrimony, where the parties are not suited to one another ; and I had received looks and other attentions from her, which none but a fool could have misunderstood, and now I was offended ; I, a married man, with a wife worth ten thousand Mrs. Philipses, because this vain, loose woman seemed to prefer another, and an unmarried man, to me. I complained to Mr. Wade about the sudden change in her political opinions, but

he smiled, and said, "My dear friend, have you not yet learned that the ladies are altogether a riddle? I am afraid, too," he added, in a whisper, "that heart has always more to do with the opinions of Mrs. Philips, than head." Experience has since taught me, that vanity and self-conceit may make a man feel more deeply than he may choose to own, though he may give other names to the causes of his disquiet. With all my anger about the preference of Mrs. Philips for Mr. Dorville, I suffered at that time, from no deeper cause, than the affront given to my sinful vanity. Not many days after this conversation, my friend and companion, Mr. Wade, set out for London, (at least so I thought), and, on going a few evenings after to Mrs. Smith's, I found the house shut up. I went into a shop, on the opposite side of the way, to ask what was the matter, thinking that a death had taken place in the family, and there I heard that the whole party had gone off, no one knew how, or when, though it was suspected that the old woman and one of her daughters had been seen on the top of a night-coach, on their way to London, having got up at the outskirts of the town. They had left debts wherever they had been allowed to get credit.

All that I heard from Mr. Martin, in the shop opposite, (and he told me many things about the mother and daughters that proved them to be women of very shameless character), made me

very angry; but I did not, as I ought to have done, go and confess all my folly, and worse than folly, to my excellent wife. I thought too meanly of her, and all her family; nay, to my disgrace be it spoken, I utterly despised the whole honest-hearted party; and the thought that they would have a right to pass their opinions on my late courses, was not to be borne, particularly as I felt that I deserved all or more than they were likely to say. I was undecided what steps to take, but, as I passed the door of Mr. Wade's lodgings, on my way home, a suspicion crossed my mind, and I thought I might as well ask the people of the house, when he was expected back. They told me that they saw no prospect of his returning, and that he had not only taken all his own effects with him, but had packed up some silver tea-spoons, and several articles of wearing-apparel, belonging to his landlord.—Mr. Wade and Miss Smith were then on their way to America, having sailed from Liverpool, as I afterwards discovered.—I was now resolved what to do. “I will go, and look after that villain, Wade, and my fifty pounds,” I said to myself, and so I found an excuse for leaving home; indeed, the loss of such a sum made me dread and dislike still more the reproaches or the laughter I was likely to meet with. We generally like to have an excuse for doing what is wrong, for such is the nature of even a bad man's conscience, that although it may be easily cheated

into silence by the answer of false reasoning, yet an answer of some sort or other it will have, before it can be silenced. I hastened home, shut up my shop, wrote a hurried note to my wife, saying, that I was unexpectedly called to London on business, and had not time to go over to The Maples, before my departure; and, leaving the house in the care of my honest neighbours, the Pritchards, I was soon many miles south of Birmingham. I had never been to London, and I thought, within myself, "I am really very likely to come upon my precious friend, Mr. Wade, unawares; at any rate, I am more likely to find him there than in Birmingham; and if I do not, I am now a citizen of the world, and with my enlarged and enlightened notions, and my fluency of speech, I shall be a valuable assistant to those great spirits that are at work for the benefit of mankind, in the present advanced state of society."

This step was taken in haste, but a haste which I need not have made, had I not purposely shut my eyes to many reasonable objections which sprung up in my mind to oppose my plan. I was undoubtedly very angry with the fellow who had so coolly robbed me of my money; but, as I hinted before, my chief reason for going to London, was a childish dislike to encounter my wife and her relations—and a still more childish desire to be in London, among the free-thinkers and political disturbers there, for I was inwardly con-

vinced that I was fitted for high places, and I said to myself, let me only be on the spot where the thick of the fight is, and they shall soon see me among the first and foremost of the sons of liberty. They will hear of me in good time at The Maples, I thought, as one of the great reformers of the times.

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I cannot help making some reflections as I write, upon the causes of my conduct on various occasions. And it now occurs to me, as it may to some others who meet with my story, that such a change in the child of a religious father (and I was the child of godly parents) was strange, to say the least of it; many may think it not only strange, but unlikely and unnatural. I think this change may be easily accounted for, for I can understand it, now I am, blessed be God! a sober-minded, and, I hope, enlightened, servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. There was no mother in the house—my mother died, as I mentioned before, when I was an infant, my aunt Merridew petted and spoiled me, and often hid my faults from my father. As for my dear and honoured father, he was really and truly a man of God, and always set me an example of godliness even in trifles, but he made one mistake, others might give it a severer name; it is not for his loving and most grateful child to do so. He showed me what was good by his example, but he did not sufficiently instruct me by those holy precepts which the parent finds written for his use in the

Word of God. He left me entirely to learn such precepts as I might, it never occurring perhaps to him, that if he did not teach me, neither in myself nor in others was I likely to find such instruction. As a father myself, and, I trust, a father anxious to do his duty, I feel a tendency to this very failing. May God preserve me from it! It was, perhaps, the error which naturally accompanied the old-fashioned though excellent school of religious people in the last generation. In the present day there are many more professors of religion; and among the merely professing, and among really pious but inconsistent Christians now living, a system the direct contrary, is very common, of giving the godly precept without the godly example. Now, though many may be won by the "silent scripture" of christian temper, and all that is pure and lovely and of good report in christian example, yet it is next to impossible that a godly teaching, from a parent who sets a bad example, can have much real influence upon his child; for we know what every child is, by nature, or, I may say, while in an unconverted and unregenerate state. We know (for we see the fact every day), that it is natural for a child to disobey the most positive commands, which are at variance with its own inclination, such as commands to be pure, to be true and just, to be gentle and patient, to be forgiving and forbearing. Yet there is no occasion to give commands to do what is wrong, for the child naturally follows a bad exam-



ple, particularly when that example is set under his father's roof.

But I return to the first remarks which I was making, to say, that although we do not educate our child so much by our studied precepts, as by our unstudied, nay, unawares example, yet the error, which I called an error of the last generation, may be pointed out with advantage in the system (perhaps I ought to call it want of system) among the really excellent of the present day. They do, as my honoured father did ; they err rather after the example of the venerable and holy Eli. They do not teach enough by precept, they do not make sufficient use of written means of grace, or they teach idly, or in a dry uninteresting manner ; their heart is full of love to Christ and things divine ; but out of the abundance of that heart the mouth does not sufficiently speak to their child. Many who would shrink with horror now from the bare idea of being in any way the cause of their child's ungodliness are leaving the father's first calling, and giving that instruction by word of mouth to neighbours, and the children of neighbours, or, if authors, to readers of all ages, which should be first given in their own nursery, among their own young children. They ought, I fully agree, to instruct others also, and thus to do the one duty, but certainly they ought not to neglect the other duties. And yet my beloved father did not altogether neglect this mode of teaching me. Ah ! how well I remember the few times when he taught me at once from

the pure well-spring of godliness ! How I feel within myself, how well I know it from my past experience, that it has pleased the Lord to give to an infant's mind the peculiar capability (notwithstanding its natural corruption) of meekly receiving, nay, of grasping and taking into it, the engrafted word, before the second nature of worldliness has formed its gradual crusts of stony petrifications over the heart. The look of my father, the place where he sat—every word he spoke, are standing out before me, from other confused and misty pictures of memory, as clear and strong in their outline and their colouring, as if I saw them now in this, the very same chamber, with my naked eye. The portion of the scripture which he read to me on one particular occasion went at once into my heart, took root there ; has seemed since to become part of me, not to have been grown over, but to have grown on with my growth, and to have strengthened with my strength. It was the beautiful account of our Lord Jesus Christ's washing the feet of his disciples at the time he shared with them His last supper, and instituted the affecting sacrament of the Holy Communion. Would to God I had profited by the lesson of humility he then taught me from that holy example ! My mind and memory retained it, my heart and my practice were not altered by it.

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The first evening of my arrival in London, I passed in the coffee-room of the inn where

the coach stopped. While I was busily searching the newspapers which I had found in the box where I sat, my attention was drawn to a conversation going on in the next box to me, between two men, who, by their dress and by the strong provincial accent in which they spoke, were evidently lately arrived from the country. They were, I found afterwards, two farmers from one of the southern counties of England, both well fed, portly men, with limbs and lungs of no ordinary stoutness. They made my hair stand on end with the horrors they foretold as about to happen to the agricultural class, and they laid their greatest complaints against the tithe system. They did not say that they wished for any alteration in the way of collecting the tithes. "No, no," said one, "I look upon any tithes as an imposition to be borne with no longer; don't tell me of altering them—get rid of them, say I, altogether. I tell you what, sir! they must adopt that plan of mine, which we were discussing last night, or the country is ruined. Look at our parson, now; I can't say that he is much of a shepherd, at least he only looks after his sheep on a Sunday. I wonder what would become of our flocks, my friend, if our shepherds were pleased to keep an eye on them, and take charge of them one day in the week. Eh, my good sir, what would become of our sheep? But your bad shepherd will often make a rare shearer, eh? Our parson's a rare shearer—loves a good heavy fleece,

I'll promise you. He knows how to make a good bargain better than I do—and that's not saying a little; looks twice at a penny; can tell you the interest of a halfpenny for half an hour. As for the pulpit, we won't say too much about that; he's a sad stick there; my little Jack, who never went anywhere but to a day-school, can beat him as to the matter of reading. He'll send you to sleep in a twinkling, when he begins droning and drawling, except when he gives the methodists a trimming; and then he's loud enough. I get many a comfortable nap in the corner of my pew, though I'm the parish churchwarden; and I suppose I ought not to go to sleep, eh? But when the parson gives a sleeping draught, one can't keep awake, eh?—a precious parson we have got, hav'n't we? Let me see, though, he does go to visit the sick, but only when he is sent for; and then, without asking a question, he will administer the sacrament, and let the poor wretch die with false comfort,—and there is your church parson for you!"—"As for me," said his companion, "I don't go to church! our rector and I had some sharp words about a field of mine, and I told him plainly that I would not darken the doors of his church while he lived in the parish. No, nor will I; and if my men won't go to Meeting, they won't do for me." In the same box with me, on the opposite seat, was seated an elderly man in black, which, though neat and cleanly, had evidently seen many years' wear.

He had been writing a letter; at least so I thought; but he rose up, and going to the box in which the two farmers were sitting: "My friends," he said, "you must not think me intrusive, if I say a few words to you on the subject of your conversation; but first, let me tell you, that I am a dissenter from the Church of England, and so were my father and my grandfather before me, the latter being a friend of the good and well-known Dr. Watts, and of many other excellent ministers among the dissenters at that time of day. I do not enter upon the tithe question with you; but one thing I must say. I think you, sir," (turning to the first speaker,) "are unjust. It may be the truth, and a melancholy truth it is, that here and there such a clergyman shall be found, as him whose way of life you have been describing. In what profession will you not find some bad persons? Nay, was there not a Judas among the twelve apostles? But, as a body, you'll scarcely find a more respectable set than the Church of England clergy. Men of education and refinement, many of them with scarcely sufficient to enable them to live with respectability, in the sphere to which they belong; but making no complaint, rejoicing in the lowliest duties of their pastoral calling, preaching the doctrines of the Redeemer's glad and holy Gospel, and treading in His humble and holy path. As for the Church of England minister of the parish, where my chapel

and congregation are, he is a comfort and a credit to the whole place. I never saw a man more anxious to fulfil his duties in every way—nay, they seem delights and privileges to him. He differs from me, and I from him, on some points, but not on any of vital importance; and I am sure he respects my differences on those points as much as I do his. Still we utterly and entirely differ on them; but I trust we can love one another as brethren under the same Parent, and servants under the same Master. I could point out many, many more such ministers in the Church of England. It is not fair, then, to say, (after giving the account you did of the clergyman,) ‘And there is your Church of England minister for you!’—And allow me to say to you, sir,” he continued, addressing himself to the second speaker, “that had I been the minister of the meeting in your parish, I could not have received you as a member of my congregation, after you had left the church in such a spirit. Nay, do you, in the judgment of your own good sense, think that you were acting rightly towards the church to which, you say, you did belong, by showing your anger against her minister in such a way? You did more harm to yourself by such a proceeding, than to any one; and, harsh as my words may seem, believe me, you were not in a right spirit to belong to any Christian congregation, if you could cherish such principles and such a disposition.”

This conversation continued till the dissenting minister called for a light and went away to his chamber. While it continued, and after his departure, I felt much inclined to join my testimony to that of the two complainants; but, unfortunately for my wish, I could not then call to mind any clergyman with whom I was personally acquainted, whose conduct was sufficiently scandalous to match the account of these two abusive farmers. The ministers known to me were very different men, and they had managed not only to agree with the farmers of their flocks, but to be highly esteemed for their work's sake and for their own sake. I am glad that I was silent.

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I often lounged about a bookseller's shop in — street, during my stay in London. The shop was full of blasphemous publications; but I am sorry to say they were rather an attraction to me. The master of the shop was a good-natured, conversible man, whose discourse enlightened me considerably on those subjects by which my understanding was degraded, and to which I was tied still more strongly by the cords of vanity. Enlightened, do I say? Yes; but there is a fearful glare from that place, where the only light is from a lake of living fire. The light in me was darkness, and the light of that place of darkness: how horrible is that light! how great is that darkness! I entered the shop one dull, rainy

afternoon, and, finding no one there, I passed on as I had often done, to the little dark room beyond the shop. Miss Collinson, the bookseller's sister, was there, bustling about the room, washing up the tea-cups, &c. &c., and putting all things to rights. "Sit down, sit down, Mr. Forster," she said, for I was rather a favourite of hers; "don't be going yet—my brother is only a door or two off, and will be back in a few minutes. Here," she said, handing over to me a pamphlet, which she had whisked off the table with her tea-cloth, and picking it up from the floor as she spoke—"here's something that may interest you. My brother was reading it at breakfast this morning. If you remember, the Barkers and the Kingstons said a deal about it last night."—"The Appeal of the Saint Simonian Missionaries," said I, reading the title, and putting on an important air, as I sometimes did, when I felt myself the first person in company—"Very good! very good! If you'll permit me, Miss Collinson, I will run this over. More light, Miss Collinson, eh? More light for this dark little island in which we dwell. More light from the land of light. The eagles of France, like the old bird in the fable, Miss Collinson, are leading the eaglets of England to mount up to the fountain of light, leading them to look at the sun."—"Yes, to be sure," said Miss Collinson—"all very true—very fine words, I'm sure;" and she sat down with her tea-cloth almost forgotten in her



careless hand, thinking that I was about to hold forth to her, as I sometimes did, in a fine speech. She was a notable, worthy woman, that Miss Collinson—a careful, thrifty housekeeper to her brother; but her wits would have lain on a sixpence. It was a sort of duty with her to admire all that her brother admired, for whom she felt a deep veneration. She was, in a manner, confused and mystified by his fine words, but nothing more; and she loved to listen to them, just as she loved to sit down and listen to the turning of a barrel-organ, when one was to be heard in the street. She was somewhat of a stranger in London, and thought a barrel-organ a fine and rare piece of music, though the Londoners think nothing of one. Poor Miss Collinson! I often think of her and her good-humoured, stupid blunders, and her square-shouldered figure, and her dull, pleasant face, and her cap, which looked for all the world as if somebody had sat upon it and flattened it; and her pinafore, which she used to put on when she had much hard work to do, a thing made like a child's brat or pinafore. I did not make a speech, as Miss Collinson seemed to expect I should, but, taking out my pocket-book, I wrote down, as I often did when I said or heard something that I thought clever—Mem. 'French eagles lead English eaglets up to the light,' meaning to bring forward the idea before many a more enlightened hearer than poor, dull Miss Collinson. She, finding

that I had nothing more to say, rose up with a loud-breathed sigh, and went to work with the tea-cloth again. Her brother came into the shop a few minutes after, but I was so busy with the 'Appeal of the Saint Simonians,' that I did not rise to meet him, and I have reason to suppose he did not notice me or know that I was in the parlour with his sister. Just as I was going to speak to him, an aged gentleman, whose appearance was remarkably pleasing, walked into the shop, so I sat down again. Miss Collinson, however, who had left me, to put on her bonnet, came down and went out through the shop. I was alone in the parlour, staring idly at the old gentleman and the bookseller. My idle stare was soon changed into one of fixed attention, and I listened to the conversation which follows, quietly, and sometimes almost breathlessly. For many minutes the gentleman did not speak, but looked at one pamphlet and then another that lay on the counter before him, touching them, however, with the manner of one who was accustomed to do all things courteously and kindly. He put aside and paid for some publications, and, having done so, he said, "This is a sad sight, my friend. I did not believe the report of it, but that report was, I now see, too true. You merely sell this poison, I hope; you do not drink it—you do not put any faith in these wretched publications?" My friend Collinson scarcely noticed the question, but said, "I hope, sir, I am above the prejudices of the times."

There seems, indeed, to be a general agreement among the upper classes to keep those below them in a state of blindness and thralldom."—"I should rather say," continued the gentleman, "that the character of the times agrees with an admirable remark that I have lately seen on the subject, 'that the unbelief of the present day has a very peculiar character.'\* It is commonly disowned by the man of education and reflection; he may live irreligiously, but he is seldom irreligious upon principle, or through conviction. But infidelity is openly avowed by those who have no knowledge, or only a smattering of knowledge. The philosophical and argumentative unbeliever, who can understand the force of evidence, has, by force of evidence, been driven from the field. But an uneducated multitude become the prey of any designing writer, who, from whatever motive, finds it his interest to persuade them that the gospel is a cunningly devised fable."—"I do not think you quite understand our system," said Collinson, smiling. "Instead of wishing to make the multitude our prey, we would make them free, we would enlighten them, and so lead them on to perfection. We admire Christianity, reverence Christianity as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough for us. We want something better

\* I suppose the gentleman alluded to a remark made by Dr. Sumner, the present Bishop of Chester, which is to the same effect.—EDITOR.

suited to the advanced state of society.”—“My good friend,” said the gentleman, “do you understand what you are talking about? I should say you do not.” This was said in the kindest, gentlest way—no one could have taken offence at the manner; but Collinson replied, insolently and sneeringly, “I should think, old gentleman, I understand these things rather better than you do.”—“Nay, nay,” said he, “I meant not to offend you: old I indeed am, and, if I might guess, you, my friend, are scarcely thirty. There is such a thing as the experience of my grey hairs. I have read many books, but I have seen even more of my fellow-men. I have met with many a sharp trial of doubt and unbelief; and, if I have found at last a little haven of quiet rest and peace, it is not without having crossed many stormy seas, and having been driven about and buffeted by many a fearful gale. There is only one way to an assured peace, and you may find the truth of what I say at last—I pray God you may! But it is a rash project to be trying first this luring way and then the other! You may, perhaps, trifle too long with time and opportunity, and be snatched away to eternity while still wandering on in a false way.” But here the gentleman stopped, and, looking Collinson kindly in the face, he seemed to be silently asking a question or two of himself. “I will say, God bless you, as my parting words,” he added, taking up his gloves and the books he had

bought, "for I fear you will only be wearied or offended if I stay longer." This was said so modestly and so kindly, that I felt it would have been impossible for Collinson to have done otherwise than beg his venerable customer to stay longer. He did ask him to stay, and said something about nothing being farther from his wish than to shun a free discussion with any man. "I will stay," said the old man, "to ask a few questions, to say a few more words. Will you tell me how it is that you can speak in terms of commendation of the Bible—I will even say the New Testament—and yet wish to set the sacred volume aside? You do, or you do not believe in it. You surely cannot put any belief in it as coming from God."—"As for coming from God," said Collinson, with a careless smile, "I must tell you, my good sir, that I am not yet convinced that there is such a being as the Being you call God; or, if there be, we hold such very opposite opinions about Him, that we can scarcely hold anything like belief in the same being. The life and character of Jesus Christ we do not object to; so far, and no farther, we can go with you: what we do object to, are the metaphysics of the book. Society has advanced to a state, by far too enlightened to receive the views which you describe as springing from a belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ."—"I will not affront you again," replied the old clergyman, "by asking if you have searched into what

you are pleased to call the metaphysics of the gospel; but I will ask you to go farther, and to observe what is the effect of those metaphysics? what effect is, in fact, produced by what you term the metaphysics of the gospel, on the natural heart and character of man? You might not, at first sight, admire the internal mechanism of a clock," (I wondered he could suppose it possible for any one not to admire the works of a clock. For my part—but I will not interrupt the conversation.) "You might say, here is nothing but a confusion of wheels and chains; but, if you found that the clock could keep time with the sun, and that, whether the sun-beams were playing upon the sundial, or whether they were stopped in the progress from Heaven by thick clouds, or turned to another part of the earth during the dark night, still, that whenever you turned your eyes upon the fair white dial, you saw the hours and the minutes accurately marked in their silent course and advancement; if, by this clock, order was introduced and preserved in your whole household, and time could be portioned out for every duty of the day; if, I repeat, you saw such to be the effect and use of what you might have been, at first, disposed to call a mere confusion of wheels and chains, you would pause before you found fault with the internal mechanism, the metaphysics of the clock: you would hesitate, still longer, before you attempted to meddle with, to improve it, much less to destroy,—to destroy what

no one, but a clock-maker, could put together again. Now, what is the effect or the result of these metaphysics of the Gospel on man ?

“The doctrines of the New Testament are, when in the hands of God, that is, when the Spirit of God applies them, creative, full of an influence, which no other doctrines ever possessed. They produce the most beautiful harmony in the disordered nature of man. When they are received, not in word but in power, into the heart of man, a far more astonishing effect follows, than when the mechanism of the clock is introduced into the dark and empty chamber of the clock-case. The effect and result, as seen by others in the man’s conduct, is moral and spiritual order in the place of the disorder of sin and misery. You will not, surely, affirm that the result and effect produced by religion, upon a man, is otherwise than goodness, and purity, and uprightness, and love, towards his fellows?”—  
“Not always, not always, sir,” said Collinson, “I know many bigots, many who preach a doctrine very different from the life they lead.”—“I am not speaking of bigots or of hypocrites, or those who deceive themselves as well as others,” said the gentleman, calmly; “an ornament of gold is not the less valuable, or the less beautiful, because one may be made to counterfeit it; a fresh and opening rose is not changed in its exquisite loveliness, in its delicate and most delightful fragrance, because an artificial-flower-maker may put toge-

ther pieces of coloured cambric with art sufficient to deceive the eye. The rose from the Great Creator's hand, after all counterfeit imitations, is still as lovely, as admired by all, as fresh after the shower, as often visited by the bee; and the man changed, created again by God's regenerating hand, is loved and honoured and respected for all those qualities which the worst are pleased with, wherever they are found; and this, in spite of the appearance and the exposure of a thousand hypocrites. Besides, there are some qualities, some effects of the Gospel upon a man which hypocrites find beyond them, and therefore do not attempt to counterfeit—such as a transparent simplicity of character; an upright and straight-forward walk through evil report and good report; or, again, an ingenuous confession of ignorance. Who, that saw Jesus Christ, the really good and godly man, when on earth, ever thought of calling Him a hypocrite? He, whose religion is said to produce so many bigots and so many hypocrites, turned the tables against all hypocrisy. They persecuted Him, they brought many daring accusations against Him, but they never called Him hypocrite. Who, that saw Him modestly turning away His face, and seeming to write on the ground, when the poor exposed woman taken in the act of adultery was brought before Him in the temple, as if He would not add, even by one searching glance, to her guilty confusion;—who, that saw Him lifting Himself up, and



looking her malicious accusers in the face, while He said unto them ‘He that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone at her,’ ever thought of calling Him hypocrite?—who, that saw Him ready to sit down and eat with the lowest and most sinful rabble, utterly fearless as to the injury that might be done to His own blameless name, by their companionship;—who, that saw him distinguishing with his notice, in a Pharisee’s house, a poor heart-broken prostitute, comforting her with tender kindness, and assuring her of forgiveness and grace, could call Him hypocrite?—who, again, that listened to His story of the two worshippers in the temple, the self-righteous Pharisee, and the honest-hearted but heart-broken publican;—who, that witnessed His matchless command of temper, His brave, unshrinking meekness, His sweet and patient forbearance, when betrayed by one of His constant companions, and betrayed with a kiss, when they seized Him with brutal force, mocked Him, blindfolded, spit upon Him, struck Him with the palms of their hands, scourged Him with rods, and crucified Him;—who that saw all these things, and heard Him, when put to the test by the worst cruelties of man—heard Him lift up His gracious voice in this affecting prayer, the only return He made for every devilish cruelty, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do’—who ever called Him hypocrite?’ The aged speaker stopped again for a little time; he appeared affected by the mention that he had

made of One, whose person and whose cause were plainly dear as his life to him; and Collinson said nothing. I thought that he looked unusually grave and thoughtful. "The aim of Christians," continued the aged man, "is to be like their Master; to be changed or renewed after \* the image of Him who not only created but redeemed them. Do your party keep such a pattern constantly in view? and is any such change produced in them? Do the metaphysics of unbelievers work any such change? Do they make the unclean and beastlike nature pure—the cunning, the double-minded, and the liar upright and single-hearted—and, the revengeful kind and forgiving—the churl courteous? or do they have the contrary effect?" Here, to my astonishment, Collinson replied readily and confidently, "I have no hesitation in saying, that our opinions have the best effect on the moral character. I know many men much improved by them."—"I would not, after asking for your opinion, say, that it is false," said the old man mildly. "I was almost prepared for some such reply, from the character that I have heard given to the new opinions you hold. You will forgive me if I doubt whether such effects are uniformly produced; or whether they are likely to be durable and stand the test of ages, as the religion of the Gospel has done; but let me ask you if humility and a teachableness,

\* Col. iii. 10.

such as is required by the master, in even his shop apprentice, are effects ever produced by your new opinions? Do you find your disciples modest—full of quiet, manly consideration, and apt to learn? or eager to take your places, and set forth and make a display of their crude and half-digested knowledge of your system, instead of waiting till they have gained the more matured knowledge of your leaders? Are they ready to own themselves wrong, and to learn in silence, when you tell them they have taken up imperfect or mistaken views?" Collinson hesitated. I knew that he had been far from pleased with me, for wishing to display my half-acquired knowledge to the public; and as for the effect of his doctrines, I could not help thinking of Mr. Wade and the Miss Smiths.

"You mistake our views," he said, at length: "we have no cut-and-dried system; we seek to know the truth, and to do what is right, and throw off all trammels. As I think I told you before, the mere matter-of-fact account of the character of Jesus Christ, we admire and approve; and we allow, that when society was in its early and infantine state, it was natural for mankind to receive such a volume as the Bible. It might be, in some respects, well suited to them, but we are beyond it now; and as for its supernatural wonders, its miracles, and so forth, men are no longer to be duped by such absurdities."—"If you mean," said the gentleman, "that the sight of miracles will not

change the heart of man, I agree with you, and could remind you that the Book of God does the same, as you may see in the twelfth chapter of St. John's Gospel, I think the thirty-seventh verse, where the Evangelist says, 'But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him.' Miracles were not performed to change the heart; that work is the work of the Spirit of God, by a still small voice speaking in the heart, and to the heart; they were performed to convince the understanding, and to be a sign even to unbelievers; and whether believed or not, they were no less miracles."—"I have read Hume," interrupted Collinson, with a manner so calm and self-satisfied, that it seemed to say, 'You may spare more words on the subject, for Hume has set the matter at rest for ever.'—"And I have read Hume," said the old man, "and a clever writer has also read Hume, and, by Hume's profound reasoning, has proved that no such person as Napoleon Bonaparte ever existed.\* But tell me, my friend, would nothing but the testimony of your own eyes and ears convince you of the fact that the miracles of Christ were really performed?"—"Nothing," said he, shortly.—"But if you had that testimony, you would believe?"—"Yes, indeed, I would believe."—"Suppose, while we are speaking, that the Creator of all things, or, I will

\* See "Historic Doubts relative to Napoleon Bonaparte," published by Parker, Oxford; and Hatchard, London.

say, a Being, whose form should fill the whole space of the sky to the utmost horizon, were to appear above us, and a voice louder than ten thousand peals of thunder, yet distinct as the clear sound of a human voice, were to proceed from the lips of this Being, and His words were these—‘I am the Lord thy God, thy Redeemer, the Holy Jesus of Nazareth.’ If such a being were seen by you—such a voice heard by you—would your doubts be satisfied? Or, suppose the walls of this house, and of every house around us, were to be shaken to the ground by a sudden earthquake, and a large and open space to be cleared where we stand, and a sudden flood of light to be poured down from above; and suppose we were to see, on looking upward, the heavens above us opened, and forms such as the Holy Bible has pictured to the mind were to appear—creatures, the mere sight of whom would tell us they were of a brighter, purer, happier world than our own; and suppose, in the midst, He whom the Scriptures describe as the eternal God, born into this world as the son of a pure virgin—picture Him to yourself, in the likeness of created man, but radiant with the glory of the Creator God—imagine that you hear His voice commanding the surface of the earth to change around you, and in the dreary space, trees to rise up with wide and leafy branches, and slopes of green and dewy grass thick set with flowers, and

streams of clear water to go winding through the fields and pleasant groves—imagine such a change actually to take place at His command—if you saw Him standing in the sky, and heard His voice from heaven, and saw the change produced at His command upon the dark and barren earth; would you believe in Him who spoke?”—“If,” replied Collinson, “all were to be plain to my sight as you describe it, (which, however, is not possible) I should believe.”—“We will suppose it to be possible, if you please, for argument’s sake.”—“Well, then, sir, I could not do otherwise than believe in what I saw.”—“But suppose, while you were looking on this wonderful sight, I were to stand beside you and not to see these wonders.”—“Not to see them?” asked Collinson. “You would see them if I saw them.”—“No,” said he, “there may be such a thing as blindness; there might be such an imperfection about me, might there not?”—“Why yes, there might be,” replied Collinson.—“And would my blindness,” said the aged gentleman, “alter in the least the real state of the things in heaven and earth, or the plain evidence of your eyesight?” Collinson could not say that it would. “Will you allow me here to preach to you, Mr. Collinson?” said the old gentleman.—“By all means, if you will take the trouble to do so,” was the reply.—“A man may be blind as to the sight of his eyes, but there is another kind of blindness affecting not the sense of the natural sight, but that

of the spiritual sight; to be blind in this latter sense, is to be without the faculty of seeing the real state of man in this fallen world, and the goodness and love of God in Christ. Fallen man is naturally in this state of blindness; but when he wilfully resists the means provided and offered to him, in order that he may receive his sight, he is then blinded in a far stronger sense. The God of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not.\* If the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, is not seen by them, it is because they refuse to come to Him who is set forth in the Bible, not only to be the light of the world lying in darkness and the shadow of death, but to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.† My dear friend, this is my natural state and your own. This is the real description of fallen man. You may doubt my word, but faith is a great gift: without it you are, in spirit, like a man whose eyes are blind, whose feet are lame, whose hands are palsied; for faith is to the spirit of man, what the organs and senses are to the body of man. Let faith be given to you, (it is never denied to him who prays in one prevailing name) the eye of the spirit loses at once its blindness, the thick scales fall off, you look at once into the world revealed to

\* See 2 Cor. chap. iv. 4.

† Isa. chap. xlii. 7.

the spiritual man. Let faith be given to you, the spirit puts forth a hand no longer palsied to take the free gift of a legal right to heaven, through the Redeemer and purchaser of a finished salvation, who has paid his blood as the price. Let faith be given you, and the feet, from that time no longer lame, walk steadily forward in the paths of holiness and peace. Will you seek this faith from God? Will you pray for this great gift?" Collinson smiled—I must own that I was beginning to feel serious and to be impressed with the words of the kind and anxious speaker; but when Collinson smiled, my feelings suddenly cooled, and I felt also inclined to smile. "All this," said he, "may well be called preaching, sir, but allow me to beg you will not trouble yourself to preach any more, for I must tell you that I am well accustomed to preaching, I was a serious and religious character not ten years ago. My family were strict and godly people." The good pastor has since told me, that when he heard Collinson speak thus, he was at first perplexed, and, as he would not allow himself to doubt the speaker's word, he considered within himself how it could be that such a change had taken place in a person really religious. He was silent and appeared thoughtful for a few minutes, then he said, "But if I may not preach to you, may I not return to what I said, only to ask you to pray? You do not now set yourself against prayer—you have always been used to pray.



When a religious character yourself, you were doubtless a man of secret prayer.”—“ I cannot say that I was,” replied Collinson, in his usual and careless manner.—“ You did not pray in secret ?” said the good minister again.—“ No,” replied Collinson, colouring, “ not much, I never had much time to give up to going down on my knees.”—“ I am satisfied now,” said the other. “ I must own you puzzled me not a little just now, when you talked of having been once a religious man yourself. I could not understand how such a fearful change could have been permitted in one who was ever a real child of God ; not that I would enter into such deep questions at the present time. My perplexity is, however, at an end. I am telling you the simple truth when I tell you, that if you have never been a man of prayer, you have never been a Christian ; prayer is God’s own and appointed way by which the man of vital godliness lives in communion with his Father and his God, and is upheld in the ways of holiness by Him. If you had known any thing of Jesus Christ, you would have asked of Him. Could you tell me you were living in the daily intercourse of the most endeared friendship with one to whom you never spoke, with whom you never interchanged a word ? Do not deceive yourself, you have never really known that Friend of friends. But will you not seek Him, while He may be found ?”—“ If I do not seek Him,” asked Collinson, “ what then ?”

The good old man looked mournfully upon him, but did not at once reply. "I suppose," continued the other, with a cold hard manner, "I suppose, good sir, you would tell me I shall be damned if I do not seek Him. Another gentleman came here the other day, and he told me in plain words, just as I repeat them, that I should certainly be damned. You think I shall. Eh, sir?"—"I am glad to find more bitterness than levity in the manner of your using that awful word," replied the venerable man. "Indeed I feel more deeply for you than you might allow me. So far from coming hither to tell you that you will be condemned through all eternity, I come, I hope, very humbly, but I am sure very earnestly, to entreat you to be saved. I may add, that, from this time, my prayers will be often sent up from my heart, that you may be blessed with all joy and peace in believing."—"You come to convert me then, sir, I suppose;" and now Collinson smiled as he spoke.—"Indeed I have no such idle presumption," replied the old minister. "Man can neither save nor convert his brother, but I come to tell you, nay, to beg you, as a father might entreat his son, to be reconciled to God. I ask you not to be angry with me on account of another question I wish to put to you."—"Well, sir, pray speak?"—"Why do I see such vile publications as these upon your counter?" he took up a very blasphemous song as he said this. Collinson

laughed. "That song," he said, "has raised many a laugh in this shop."—"I am very sorry for it," answered the old clergyman, "and surely 'tis contrary to your principles to sell it, the profit too, not being worth a consideration."—"You say very true about the profit, sir, but, as to being contrary to my principles, I don't understand what you mean."—"Simply this: you told me just now, that the Holy Bible was not good enough for the advanced state of society; that a purer and more enlightened religion was needed now; that your party were liberal to all other parties. Can this be the case while you countenance such a production as this song?"—"If it tells the truth, even in what you might call an impious manner, good sir, it cannot be altogether so bad as you make out."—"But it does not even tell the truth about what is written in the Bible. It makes a false charge against the Bible, and then ridicules what are in fact its own false words.\* For instance," he continued, quietly and gravely reading a few words of the song, "It is here said, that Moses, the great and holy lawgiver of Jehovah, turned a camel into a flea by the help of his magical rod. Now this act is not written of Moses in the Bible, therefore, this is not dealing with the Bible with the common fairness you would show to the most worthless volume. Again, your song speaks of

\* A very blasphemous song is here alluded to.

Job as 'a stupid old fellow of Uz:' putting religion altogether out of the question, I believe there is but one opinion generally of the character of Job. The heaviness of his sufferings, his patience and meekness of wisdom, and the grand ideas through the whole book have called forth the admiration even of unbelievers."—"I cannot say that I particularly care for the song, or admire it," said Collinson, "but if the Bible is what you say it is, no unbeliever could put it in a ridiculous point of view, no attacks or ridicule could injure it."—"Let me ask you a question," said the old gentleman. "Suppose a fair and modest gentlewoman were walking down this street. You will agree that there is scarcely a more lovely object than a pure-minded, artless woman; now, if a brutal fellow were to come behind her, and, unseen, by herself, to mock and mimic her walk and her quiet, modest bearing, in a manner at once ludicrous and insulting, there might, perhaps, be some low indecent wretch who would find amusement in such degrading conduct; but would you, or any one with the common feelings of manliness, be otherwise than indignant and angry at such disgusting insults? and would she not herself, who was the subject of these insults, be, all the while, as pure and blameless as if none had been offered? It is often the same with the Holy Bible." Collinson made no reply, except by some half-uttered sound, which seemed to express an unwilling assent. "I trust," said the aged

gentleman, who now held out his hand to the bookseller, "I trust we part as friends, and that we shall remember one another as friends—if I might urge one subject once again upon you, before we part," he said mildly.—"Well, sir, pray speak just as you wish."—"I ask you, then," said he, "I entreat you, as being myself an aged man, and very near the grave, and gate of death, I entreat you now, while it is called to-day with you, to put your mind, your heart, your very self, into such a posture of submission towards that eternal Being or Intelligence, whom you may not consent to call God, as the less should feel towards the greater."—"But suppose," said Collinson, "there should not be such a Being, how can I do what you require?"—"Suppose there should be, and I have, at least, as much right to suppose there is, as you have to suppose there is not. You may say, 'I see him not.' I may answer, 'Though you see not a Being greater than yourself, do you not see powers which are, probably, the servants of such a Being, far greater than yourself?' The unseen power of death, so terrible in effects that are seen, is greater than you; nay, mystery, which is, to the spiritual world, what common air is to the visible world, the very atmosphere which envelopes every object, is not mystery itself greater in power than you? Give, then, the doubt its weight; and, supposing it to be possible that there is a Being greater than yourself, ask to be taught

of that power. The very child, who looks up to its father as a being of higher intelligence and of more experience than itself, might teach us that now, while we know in part, it is well to sit in lowliness, in gentle and submissive lowliness, at the feet of One, who, should there be the most distant chance of His existence, is as infinitely above us and our brightest thoughts, as the clear blue heaven and the sparkling stars above are higher than the pavement of this narrow dusty street, and the lamps of foul, but brilliant gas, which are beginning to lighten it. Good bye—God bless and guide you! I fervently hope He may. You cannot be offended at my wishing you well.” Collinson took the hand offered to him, and grasping it heartily, he said, “My kind, good friend, for I am sure you are my friend, will you ever think it worth your while to visit me again? I shall be really glad to see you.”

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I shall make no remark, at present, on the effect made by the above conversation upon me. Collinson talked it over with me, when he found I had been present, though unnoticed, all the time. He laughed at much that had been advanced, and remarked that it was a pity so good an old man, in whose opinions and sentiments there was so much truth and goodness, should be still held in the wretched thralldom of old and exploded errors. I said little in reply, but I had heard much to

make me think very seriously, not at that time, but a future season. I say not at that time, for I had then a determined wish and will to remain among the companions I had chosen. My pride and vanity were now full blown. My anxious desire to make a display, or, as I called it, to distinguish myself, was as strong as ever. I joined in the commendation of Collinson as to the good intentions of the old man, and laughed heartily when he ridiculed, as he did, some of his sentiments. I was not yet come to myself. I shall not attempt to write down the conversations I heard or joined in during my stay in London, nor the many churches and chapels I attended. I was present at several political meetings, and I heard strange opinions, and saw strange doings at a place called the Rotunda, also in a house in a street, the name of which I forget, farther to the east-end of the town. Here it was that I determined to make a display of my talents, and strangers being invited, according to the printed paper I received at a shop in the same street, to address the assembly as at Birmingham. I did make my speech; but, in some conversation that I held with the lecturer for that evening, he told me that my ideas, though correct on many points, were much confused, and that I had still much to learn before I could make a useful lecturer; and he desired me, in a tone of great self-importance, to attend the lectures constantly for instruction.

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Now this was not what I wanted ; I considered myself quite as fit to enlighten the nation as the man who addressed me. I came away, therefore, secretly resolved to go no more among that party ; and I must own that the books published and sold in that shop and at Collinson's, when I came to consider them seriously, appeared so disgraceful, as coming from a party that talked so much of teaching a purer morality than the Bible, that I felt ashamed of the whole set. When I returned home to my lodgings, I began to ask myself what benefit I or any one else had derived from my new courses. I had been wandering about without earning a penny, nay, I had been wasting away my money and my time to no good purpose. I had left an affectionate wife, my first-born child, my thriving business, my comfortable home—and for what ? for what indeed ? I repeated to myself. I determined to set off on my return home, but not till after a few days, as I wished to attend one more political meeting, at which the celebrated Mr. ———, and several other persons, whom I still held in reverence, were to address the populace. I went, and was so convinced by their arguments and their eloquence, that I quite gave up my intention of returning at once to Birmingham. I determined, indeed, that unless a speedy and radical reform was made in every department of church and state, and the whole country regenerated according to the plans of ——— and his adherents, I would have no-



thing more to do with England, but sail for America and settle there for life. My plans and prospects were suddenly broken up by a very common occurrence, common at least to those who make one of the mob in a popular meeting of the kind I attended. I was suddenly surrounded, just as the meeting ended, by a party of well-dressed men, and, before I could recover from my astonishment at being so hustled, the party had as suddenly separated, carrying off with them my watch. I put my hand to my breeches pocket to feel for my pocket-book, and, to my horror and consternation, that was also gone. What was to be done I knew not! The sum of money in my pocket-book was not a large one, but I had no more in London, and I had carried it about me, thinking there would be less risk in doing so than in leaving it at my lodging; for I knew nothing of my landlord, or of several other lodgers in the house, nor did I ever occupy my apartment except at night: besides, I had been in many London crowds before without having had my pocket picked, and had begun to think the stories told of London pickpockets mere fables. I saw but one wise plan to be pursued, and decided upon it instantly—I set off at that moment on my way back to Birmingham. I did not return even to my lodgings, for I owed a few shillings to the people of the house, and I expected a new suit of clothes to be sent home to me the next

morning,\* having agreed to pay for them on delivery; nay, I had ordered shoes, and one or two other articles I stood in need of, having only brought my best suit from Birmingham, and that, though my best, was not a new one.

A long and weary journey I had of it; for the only money I could obtain was from the sale of my umbrella, and my mother's wedding-ring, which I always wore on my little finger. I had full time, as I walked along (sad, and often hungry, like a common tramper by the way-side) to find out what a fool I had been! I began to think at last that I should have been wiser as well as happier if I had followed my father's example, and looked oftener into my Bible; and I confessed to myself that I was but ill qualified to judge of a religion, of which I knew little but from the attacks of its abusers. I drew near my native town a wiser and a humbler man than when I left it. I had travelled all night and was very tired. Still I felt my spirits rise as I entered once again the quiet, narrow street, which I had quitted with such proud confidence in myself.

I found my old friend, Mrs. Pritchard, on her knees, scrubbing the flag-stone at her own doorway; and the hearty shake of the hand she gave me, after she had risen up, and half wiped her wet hands in her apron, did my heart good. "Will

\* All this was paid after my return home.

you let me have the key of the next house?" I said.—"As for the key," she replied, "the Missis has that."—"What, is she at home?" I said.—"Yes, sure she is, and both she and the child are well and hearty."—"I had rather not go in yet," I said, feeling more than ever ashamed of myself. "Nonsense, Mr. Forster!" cried the good woman; "she will be right glad to see thee. She was only saying last night that nothing should make her give you up till she heard of your death, if she should live so long. But if you are afraid of giving your dear wife a shock, by coming in upon her without a warning, I'll tell you what we'll do: I know she has been up and about this half-hour, for as I threw open my chamber-window, that looks into your back-yard, I saw her carrying a pail of water from the pump. I will make an errand to borrow something of her, and when she has opened the door and let me in, I will leave it a-jar. Do you follow me in about a minute, and step into the shop, and sit you down there till your wife comes to you."

I followed my good neighbour's advice. She found my wife just beginning to wash and dress the child, and she waited till the dear babe was dressed before she said a word about my return. In the meantime, how was I occupied?

I had entered the shop: the shutter was still up; but through a narrow open space at the top, the bright, pleasant sunshine of morning fell aslant

from one end of the room to the other, hanging almost like a body of goldish dust in the air. All the rest of the room was in a gloom, but I could make out well enough the forms of my working-bench and my seat, and of the clocks and time-pieces ranged round the apartment. To my surprise and joy, they were all clicking as when I had left them, and I sate me down, and thought. Well! this is the pleasantest music I have heard for the last half-year! I never thought any so well worth hearing! Before I was aware of my being even drowsy, as I leant back in the chair, one thought after another rising in my mind, I fell fast asleep. I believe my eyes, for some time before they closed, were fixed upon a large inlaid clock, one I was very proud of, as the best among them all. My father and I had taken a deal of pains about it; and the case, for a good bit of mahogany, and for brass-work, and other work about it, though I say it, that shouldn't say it, could not be matched in the town or county either. I slept long enough to dream what was, to be sure, a strange dream, but not without its instruction to me, and, perhaps, to others also. The new mahogany clock, inlaid with brass, which my eyes were drowsily fixed on when I fell asleep, seemed suddenly to leave off clicking with its customary regularity; the chain seemed running down and running up again, with a strange fury; the hands on the dial moved sometimes rapidly, sometimes

slowly, but without any regard to telling the time ; then the dial was suddenly pushed and dragged backwards and forwards, and this way and that, till it was forced to turn towards the wall, and the door of the case flying open with a burst, all the works of the clock were thrown open to my view. A pretty confusion there was in this same clock, which had been a gentleman of most regular habits, never missing or gaining a minute—a model of good order and punctuality to all the ill-going clocks and watches that would not submit to my good regulations. At first, there seemed to be a general commotion ; one wheel jostling another, and wheels, fly, pendulum, and all, struggling and climbing, and rolling under and over the bell, and making a din, exceedingly distressing and unpleasant to a watchmaker's ears. Methought (to be sure, I was only dreaming !) that, holding each of my hands over my ears, I rose up, and approaching the clock, spoke to the works, as I might have done to a set of living creatures, and said, “ You parcel of noisy, brazen scoundrels ! leave off that abominable jangling, or I will dash you all to pieces ! ” It did not seem strange to me then, that some of them found a voice to answer me, and the sum and substance of the complaint was this ; that the lesser wheels both of the going and the striking departments had left their stations, and insisted on taking the places of the greater wheels. The bad example had spread—every part of the machine

had separated in a dispute for a change of places. The bell had been sorely scratched and battered ; and even the pendulum, having heard what was going on above, made a bold and, at last, successful leap, and got into the middle of the upper chamber among the works, declaring that he would dangle no longer, like a thief from a gibbet, or be kept in an outside place ; while the bell insisted on being allowed to strike the minutes—nay, each of the sides, and the back of the upper case, put in a claim to occupy the place of the dial.

The strangest thing of all was, that the voices of the wheels and works bore a great resemblance to voices of orators and others I had lately heard, the lesser wheels talking loudest, there seeming to be an increase of noise and pretension, just in proportion to the decrease of actual size and real importance. At last I succeeded in making myself heard and obeyed ; and, as the din and tumult began to die away a little, I observed that the great or largest wheels were not among the brawlers. They had, indeed, been jostled out of their places, and received many blows, but, when left alone, they lay very humbly below the other wheels, making no complaint. Almost before I could put a question, the third wheel (one of the lesser wheels) having leapt to the top of the bell, screamed out, in a discordant voice, insisting, not as a request, but as a right, that he should have his own, his proper station, that place which he

was most unjustly deprived of, in the clock. I could not help smiling at the upstart, but I said (for there is no such way to humble a boaster, as to put his boastings to the proof and test): "Wherever your station is, there place yourself, and I will judge of your fitness." And then I thought, that on a signal from me, the wheels and works all fell into their places, all but the great going wheel; his place was occupied by this little wheel, which had just spoken. It was amusing to see how the little boaster endeavoured, by straining, to stretch and enlarge himself; the very stuff, or I should say metal, he was made of, prevented his swelling out to the bulk of his self-conceit. At every effort he only spun round more rapidly, but, of course, he remained just as insignificant as before. "Well!" he said, panting and glowing with heat, after several of these absurd efforts, staring me in the face as he spoke.—"Well!" I replied, "what are you, my friend, but a little wheel, well fitted for a little sphere of action, but, in your present station, quite out of place? I have allowed you to make proof of your high pretensions, but of what use have you been to the clock? There are the works notwithstanding all your rapid turning and spinning, quite motionless; there are the hands, they have not moved a hair's breadth since you began. Off, and away with you to your own place! and be contented to do your duty there." He rolled off with all his speed, and was hidden, in

a moment, among the other works. And now I expected that the great wheel would take its place, and the clock be restored to its former state of order and regularity, when I perceived that the pin-wheel had gently stolen into the vacant space. "Very well," I said, "make the trial." The trial was made, and, of course, without success; and the self-sufficient pretender withdrew like one ashamed of himself. Again I thought to myself, "All will go on as it ought to do," but it seemed that none of the wheels or works learned wisdom from the warning given in the defeat of another. Each needed a personal experience of his own incapacity, before he could be taught humility, or learn his own proper place; and, in my dream, I had the patience which I should never have possessed if awake, to let each make the trial he demanded. At last there was not one pretender that had not been humbled; and I could not help saying to them, as they lay one here and one there, "A pretty set of fellows you are, and a most complete scene of confusion have you made in this once harmonious and well-ordered house. If I were to take away the great wheel and to leave you as you are, of what use would you be? You would be merely strange-shaped, useless pieces of brass and iron. However, in your places you are very well; and, when you are put together again, let each of you study to be quiet and keep in his proper sphere." I said all this in a big voice of



much importance, laying down a law to others, which, alas ! I had broken outrageously myself. That truth did not strike me just then ; but, as I wound up the clock in my dream, I stopped every now and then to continue my lecture. I set the pendulum a swinging, and, having wound up the striking-chain, I began to turn the hands to set the clock to the right time. I was listening for the sound of the strokes, when another, sweeter sound close to my ear, woke me at once—the sound of laughter, the laughter of a little joyous child. The first object that met my sight was the lovely face of an infant—light curls of fair hair, glossy and soft as silk ; blue eyes, with smiles in every corner of them ; cheeks dimpled with merriment, and a little fresh mouth, as red as a rose, wide open, so that two very little white teeth were plainly seen. “ Who in the world is this ? ” I said, as the sweet little face, that had been thrown back, again approached mine, and the soft fresh lips covered mine with kisses, and two little fondling arms hung clinging round my neck. I looked up, and my question was answered by lips, almost as bright as those of the beautiful infant. “ It is your own child, my husband ! ” were the pleasant words I heard ; “ and we are both here, your poor happy wife, and your little girl, to love you and to kiss you, and to welcome you home again.”—“ And is that all you have to say, my Margaret ? ” I cried ; “ have you no reproaches ?

for I deserve them :—no anger ? I will bear it.”—  
“ Dear, dear Reuben,” she said, in a softer and sweeter tone, leaving the baby in my arms, and stooping lower and lower, till I found she was kneeling beside me, with one of her arms round my neck, and her cheek pressed gently to mine ;  
“ dear, dear husband, you are come back, and I am too happy to think of reproaches ! too light-hearted to be angry !” That was a wise woman, that wife of mine ! wiser than any person I had met with in my travels, though she had no book learning. Her sweet, kind welcome, melted my very heart within me ; and tears, tears of shame and sorrow, and self-reproach, streamed down my face. “ Dear Reuben,” she said, and the tears were swelling in her own eyes, but the smiles were still upon her lips, “ don’t take on so ! pray, pray don’t, or you’ll frighten the baby, who seemed to know at once that you were no stranger, and who began crowing and laughing the instant she saw you !”—She stood looking at me in silence for some little time ; and then, forgetting for awhile her determination to make me cheerful—“ Poor fellow ! poor fellow !” she said : her eye had rested on my pale and sunken cheeks, my threadbare clothes, and my very shoes worn into holes, and now thickly covered with dust, from my long way-side journey.—“ Well, well ! baby,” she said at length, as the sweet child looked up, and smiled, and offered to go to her—“ We must think of

nothing but father's return ! we have him back again, and we must not let him go away any more, —must we, my darling baby ?”

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As I sat by the blazing fire in the kitchen, and looked round upon every thing in clean bright order, I said within myself, “ Here it is that I may receive the lesson I want ! here every thing is done decently and in order ! here the wheel is going round in its own place !” I found, indeed, that my wife had made no loud outcry about my bad conduct, when she found what a cruel trick I had played her, even though she had been told that the abandoned Mrs. Philips was the companion of my flight. She had, she owned, retired often and often to pray for me in the secrecy of her chamber. She came back to Birmingham, had brought over an old maiden sister of her mother's to stay with her, and she kept the house in the same order as when I had been at home.

With some difficulty she had sought out an elderly man, who had been, at one time, journeyman to my father, and she had agreed with him that he should manage the business of the shop till my return ; and told my customers that she expected me soon from London. Thus, when I returned home, I found that my business flagged only for a week or two. I was able to clear up my character, so far as Mrs. Philips was concerned ; and, whenever I could find an opportunity, I begged

my friends to take warning by my vain pretensions, and senseless self-conceit. I do believe that my dream had some effect in sobering me ; for I could not help discovering an image of myself in the third wheel, that wished to take the place of the great wheel.

I hope I have found my station now ; and I trust, with the blessing of God, to be wise for the future ; and stay at home, and to strive to be useful and contented, in that state of life where it has pleased God to place me.

I must not forget to mention, that on the very first morning of my return home, as soon as breakfast was over, my wife turned to me and said, modestly,—“ We have begun a custom here, dear husband, which you have always been pleased with in my father’s house ; I would not speak of it before breakfast this morning, for you were then very tired and faint, for want of food. Ever since my aunt has been with me, ever since baby and I came home, we have read a short portion of the Holy Bible, and then joined in family prayer.” I think I knelt down that morning a sincere penitent. How truly I now feel that God is in a manner not acknowledged in that household where family prayer is not offered up !

My opinions are much changed by my hard-earned experience ; and now, when I hear people holding forth, on what ought to be done on this occasion ! and what they would do on another !

—of course, I mean men who are qualified only by their own self-conceit to talk so grandly;—and I fear the number of such persons increases daily—I think to myself, “Here’s a third wheel out of its place! and it wants to take the place of the great wheel. Those two men who are talking themselves hoarse on politics and religion, are spoiling a good shoemaker, and a clever tailor. The one with his last, his bristles, and his leather, is a useful member of the commonwealth: so is the other with his goose; and while cutting the coat to his cloth. But now they are out of their place and calling; and, consequently, they are making themselves not a little ridiculous.” I don’t mean by this that men of genius do not rise from the lower classes, but genius is unpretending. You may distinguish it at once from the vain conceit of these talkers and boasters. The one is as different from the other as a watch-paper of cut tinsel from the diamond in a jewelled watch. Genius will mount by the force of its own inherent power, not by any vain display of the claims of that power. I met with an instance which is a case in point, as the lawyers say, of the truth of this, not long after my return home, as will be seen before I come to the end of my story.

About a month after I came home, my dear wife received a very pressing invitation to be present at the marriage of her youngest brother, who had been, till he went to reside with his uncle and aunt

in Shropshire, her constant and favourite companion. George Armstrong was a few years younger than Margaret, and a very fine open-hearted young man. The invitation to myself was very kind, and as Margaret expressed a great desire to go, but declared at the same time she would not go without me, I agreed at last to accompany her, and, taking our child with us, we set off for the quiet village of Hallowdine; we arrived there one pleasant Saturday evening, about five o'clock, and a hearty and most affectionate welcome we met with from all the party at the Hillside, for that is the name of the farm. My dear wife had told me, as we went along, that we should, perhaps, see a great scholar at her uncle's; and on my asking whom she meant, she said he was the brother of Lucy Graham, her intended sister-in-law. There is a fine old English fashion about a Shropshire farm-house, which is well worth seeing, I should imagine, by those who live in places where the old English character is no longer to be found; and I shall not pass over the Hillside, to which I paid such a pleasant visit, without giving some account of the place itself, and the persons there. The house is large and long, and its noble-looking gable-ends still bear the remains of much fine carving upon their ancient timbers; it stands at the upper end of a deep valley, or rather half way up the hill that closes up the valley on the north side. The hill, with its broken surface of

rock, (the red rock, so common in some parts of Shropshire,) rises up far above the highest chimneys of the house; and the garden, which extends far down the same hill, is laid out quite according to the old style, in terraces, with here and there a little flight of steps built of the rock of the soil. All along at the bottom of the hills, winds a broad fast-flowing brook as clear as glass. I remember, that on the evening we arrived, the herdsman was driving the cows from their pasture in the meadows, to be milked, and we were unable to get on for many minutes, to the great delight of my merry child, from the somewhat unmannerly walk of these beautiful cows. There were between thirty and forty in the herd; many of them stopped to draw up a long draught from the brook which their own feet had deepened at that, their usual ford for crossing. A few, whose tempers were seemingly not of the mildest, made the narrowness of the sandy lane, which leads from the brook up to the home-stead, an excuse to give a sly thrust, or a rude, jostling shove at a party of sleek, gentle creatures, that walked leisurely forward, switching their tails lightly and quietly over their backs; while some, whose portly size and shape might have forbidden the display of such frisky humours, trotted on at a brisk rate, their large barrel-shaped sides swinging backwards and forwards, and the milk dripping all the way from their richly-filled udders.

We followed quietly after the herd of cows,

catching, every now and then, the delightful sweetness of their breath, and pouring forth such praises of the fresh and lovely country, as the inhabitants of a narrow street, in a large and smoky town, might be supposed to do. When we had wound our way up the sandy lane in the train of the cows, and came out upon the little breezy plain before the farm-house, Margaret made me admire the old house and the row of huge Scotch firs, standing, like a range of tall pillars, right on the edge of the plain, where the hill becomes steep and in places almost abrupt; and she pointed out the black-timbered cottages and farm-houses of the village half hidden by their orchard-trees, and the church tower, and the beautiful grove of elms that quite hides the rectory; and the hall, where the squire resides, with its long, grand avenue extending through a wide sweep of the park, from the lodge at the entrance, to the very hall-door; and, farther on, beyond the valley, the heights and fir-crowned rocks of Hawkstone; and Grinshill with its quarries of white stone, much prized in the neighbourhood; and, in the farthest distance, the mountains of North Wales, and the Brythen Hills on the border, with their bold slopes and jagged tops standing out from the dark blue misty distance beyond them.

“I should like to go and help them,” said Margaret aloud, as one of the milk-maids put down her pail, and threw open the gate to admit the



cows into the farm-yard. "Look, Baby, there is a Shropshire milk-maid—there is Jenny Buttery going to milk the cows, to get sweet milk for my Baby; no, no, she's coming first of all to see us. How are you, my dear, good Jenny?—'tis a long time sin' we met, and that's Sally, I see, bringing up the calves;—well, you both look as jolly and as fresh as ever."—"And how bin you, Margaret dear?" said the stout, smiling milk-maid, "or Mrs. Forster, as I suppose we mun call thee now. And is that the master? God bless him if it is; and God bless the sweet baby. Here! you mun just give her to me while you jump out; and then I will leave you to find your own way, for I'm thinking the cows are waiting for me."—"Did you ever see any thing so neat as her dress?" said Margaret to me, while Jenny ran off with the milk-pail. "Look at the short petticoat of stout linsey-wolsey, and the neat, well-washed, cotton jacket, and the shoes and stockings so tight and trim and strong. They can afford to buy good shoes when the money is not dribbled away in draggling flimsy gowns and new-fangled finery, which are only in the way when there is a heavy morning's work to be got through in a right way; but Jenny was always a pattern for cleanliness and neatness! Did you mark her hair, that's as yellow as gold, and so clean and bright, with not a curl-paper to be seen, but just combed and smoothed away on either side with a band of black

riband bound round it under her cap? I must own I think an honest Shropshire lass is a very comely lass; but it's a fine old English county, and I love it with all my heart. I have loved it since I was a child, for this was my grandfather's house, ay, and his father's before him, and many a month have I lived among the happy family; and often and often have I gone with the mistress and the girls to the milking, for I was always reckoned a good milker. Oh, Reuben, there's no county like Shropshire!"—"Bless thee, bless thee, child, for those words." Margaret looked round with a sparkling smile for the speaker, and, in another moment, her arms were round her uncle's neck. "Spoken just like my honest Margaret," he continued, when he had kissed her, and while he gave my hand a rough shake—"spoken just in her hearty happy voice. I'm glad to see thee come to the old place, my wench, as fresh and as smiling as ever." We entered the house at once, but the mistress was in the dairy, and her daughter Mary and the three maids were at the milking. George Armstrong had no business in the house at that time, and so his uncle told him, laughing, and turning a side-glance at me as he spoke; but his presence was very excusable, for he stood before a fair, sweet-looking girl, and seemed to pay earnest attention to something she was telling him: her needle-work was in her hand, but her hands were not moving, and she was looking in his face.

Whatever this earnest parley might be, it was put a stop to by our appearance, and George Armstrong and his engaged wife, Lucy Graham, came forward to bid us welcome. "I was telling George," said Lucy, blushing, "about the visit I have had this morning from the vicar and Miss Rose, and the fine scripture words he spoke to me when he took my hands and blessed me in the Lord's name, and the present he brought me. May be you'd like to see it, dear Margaret?" she said, and she took it from under a folded piece of muslin in her work-basket. We all admired the present; but our good uncle seemed even better pleased than Lucy. It was a case of dark-green morocco leather, containing a Bible and a Book of Common Prayer, plainly but expensively bound in the same costly leather.

He opened the book, and read aloud, "For Lucy, wife of George Armstrong, from her friend and her husband's friend, the vicar of Hallowdine."—"So then, the books are not yours, after all," said our uncle, smiling archly, "there is no wife of George Armstrong here, is there, my Lucy?" Lucy passed one hand within his arm; and looking up in his face, as she gently took the books away with the other, she said,—“You like to make me blush, uncle; and I dare say I am blushing now; but I know this, uncle, and so do you, that the wife of George Armstrong will never blush from any feeling but modesty, when his name is spoken.”—"I see

George is not here, to hear this fine speech," said the farmer, "but gone off to his work, like a good lad; for he knows there is no time to be lost on a Saturday evening."—"But there is some one you will be glad to see, Margaret; turn your head, and you'll see my good old mother looking in at the window." Old Mrs. Armstrong stood there smiling, and beside her was a young man, whose age, perhaps, might have been five-and-twenty, whose appearance and manner of speaking were plainly those of a person accustomed to the society of the gentry of the land; and yet there was no show-off about him, but a plain manliness, which would have made the poorest man feel at ease in his company. I should never have guessed, had I been left to guess it, that Mr. Graham had carried all before him (as the saying is) at the University to which he belonged, that he was in fact a man of first-rate genius, genius highly cultivated and highly prized; for at that time the finest scholars, not only in England but abroad, were seeking his acquaintance, or corresponding by letter with him.

The extraordinary talents of Mr. Graham had been discovered just after he left a little country school, to become clerk in a wholesale warehouse in Liverpool, and his kind-hearted employer, and several clergymen, among them the rector of his own parish and the vicar of Hallowdine, had raised, by their own contributions, a sufficient sum of

money to send him to College. He had only needed scope and space for his extraordinary talents.

“ We have been waiting for you among the flower-beds, Lucy,” said her brother ; “ shall we come in ? or will you come and gather your nosegays at once ? ” We all went at once to the garden, and Lucy soon came back with us, her basket heaped up with flowers ; for she had promised her friend Mary to fill all the bough-pots with fresh flowers against the Day of Rest.—“ It is always a day of cheerfulness and happiness in this house,” said Lucy, her hands the while busied with the gay and beautiful flowers, and her whole countenance lighted up with smiling cheerfulness.—“ I have often told you of a Sunday at the Hillside, John,” she said, addressing her brother ; and then she turned to me. “ You have never been among us at this happy home before, have you, Mr. Forster ? It is here,” she added, with a more serious sweetness, “ I have often thought it is here that if any should come who do not obey the word, the holy and the blessed word of God, it is here they may be won, without the word, to love the ways of godliness, to confess, as I have often done to myself under this happy roof, that if the ways of God begin with a narrow gate and a strait path, by which self must be mortified and sin crucified, they lead on most surely to ways of pleasantness and paths of peace.” I must own, I always felt a repulsive shudder, when I heard profane sentiments from a woman’s lips. I never

could quite deaden the feeling, in my own days of open profaneness and ungodliness, when Mrs. Phillips and her family were my chosen companions ; but I now felt what a charming grace is given by piety—simple, unaffected, cheerful piety, to the loveliest female lips ; and I should have thought Lucy one of the sweetest creatures I had ever seen, had not my eyes turned, just at that moment, upon my own kind, true-hearted Margaret, who had loved and defended me through evil report ; and as she sat there, with my darling child in her arms, I thought to myself, if Lucy stands the proof and the trial that my wife has borne, George Armstrong will have reason to call himself a happy husband ; but then I sighed to think, that perhaps few wives would have had so much to endure from their own natural guardian and protector, as my dear partner had had from me.

“ You do nothing, then, but what is absolutely necessary on Sunday,” I said to Mr. Armstrong the next day, as we were walking together to church.—“ It is the day of rest,” he replied, “ and we work hard, early and late, every other day during the week, and we do not wish to lose the high privilege which is given us by the word of God, and secured to us by the law of the land.”—“ Yes,” I answered, “ but you will surely allow that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”—“ I do, indeed ; but we try never to forget that man was made for the eternal

Sabbath of heaven ; and since this blessed day has been made for us,—since, from the fresh morning of the creation it was given from the Creator's hands to be our weekly foretaste of heaven, we are jealous of our rest ; it has, we know, been hallowed and blessed for us. We would do all in our power to keep up the quiet happy character of the day. Man, in his fallen state, has, indeed, great need of such a day, among all the cares and worrying vexations of his work-a-day life."

" But you seem to forbid worldly amusements. I will agree with you, that labour of any kind, unless it be labour of love, or some necessary work, should be avoided—but, dear me, may we not amuse ourselves?"—" I do not *say* much about forbidding worldly amusements," replied Mr. Armstrong, " but in my own family my wishes are well known, and when new comers engage in my service, I generally find, that what they conform to, at first out of respect for me, they end by adopting, from having found real enjoyment in their conformity I always state the ways of the household in a plain, straight-forward way, to every servant that comes to be hired, and I then sometimes meet with a positive refusal expressed to engage in my service—we both do as we please, and part in perfect good-will. As to worldly amusements on the Lord's-day, we are happy without them, we do not choose the world to find our enjoyments for us on that day ; if we were to live for ever in the present

world, it would be right to make the Sunday a day of worldly amusement; but if the day is given to be unto us a foretaste of the happiness of eternity, surely the happiness of the day must be of the same nature with that of eternity. We, at the Hill-side, should fear that all was not right if we were beginning to look to the world and its follies for our Sabbath enjoyments—we do not consent to let the world choose our happiness for us, we look to a far higher and more unfailing spring !”

“ I see, my good friend,” I said, “ that you wish to make a convert of me to your views.”—“ You may say so, if you please,” he replied, in his blunt good-humoured manner. “ But set yourself at ease on that point, young man. As for my views, God forbid that I should wish you to hold them if they were contrary to His blessed word, and if they did not agree with it. I am not such a conceited fool as to imagine that I can change a man’s heart ; I know too much of the Bible to take such maggots into my head ; at the same time, I have no hesitation in saying, that I wish the husband and the home of my good, open-hearted Margaret, to know as much Sabbath happiness as I do.” Little more was said before we entered the church, but as I walked along in silence, I could not help thinking over to myself, what I had already seen of the Sunday at the Hillside. The work, which it was really necessary to do, done and done with, in so orderly a manner, and at an early hour ; the Sabbath clean-



liness in every dress—the Sabbath cheerfulness on every countenance. I felt, on the Saturday evening as if a festival was expected and prepared for, and I saw on the Sunday morning, that the festival had arrived.

I had heard much said in praise of Mr. Herbert, the vicar of Hallowdine, and was disposed, beforehand, to love and revere him. We were in church before he entered the reading-desk, and till he began to read, my back was turned towards him. For the first minute, when I saw his face and heard his voice, I felt perplexed, and then, as I looked again, I was certain. Mr. Herbert was the very man, the same aged gentle pastor whom I had seen in Collinson's shop. I was, as they say, struck all of a heap, and as I stood up and heard from his gentle lips those words of God's own most holy word, "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him : neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws which He set before us ;" the thought came into my heart and seemed to sink into and root itself there—that the love of God in all his dealings towards me, both in the ways of providence and grace, was beyond what I could have expected or conceived ; and I do not think I was wrong or superstitious in feeling, that Mr. Herbert had been brought to that profane shop for me as well as for its master, and that I had been brought to sit under the teaching of the same

mild shepherd of Christ's flock, that he to whom I was already so favourably disposed, might be made the blessed instrument of saving my soul alive. When he continued in those heart-broken words of the poor prodigal, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto Him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son," I was led to feel more deeply than I had yet felt it, that my chief sin, that, which in fact was the source of every other sin, was my sin against God, the evil I had committed so recklessly, so carelessly, in the sight of the Father of mercies. The service of the church, often as I had heard it before, seemed new to me. I am sure I did not look to man for pardon, nor did I trust to man for help; but I was encouraged in my confessions and in my prayers by the very tones of that shepherd's voice which I had before heard pleading and persuading, in such tender earnestness, with error and impiety.

"Was I wrong, my kind friend," I said, addressing myself that evening to Mr. Armstrong, "in making a solemn vow to God, while I knelt before Him in church, that I would not only give up the service of ungodliness for ever, but that I would live a life devoted to Him and to His holy will?" I had already spoken to him of that occasion, on which I had before met Mr. Herbert. My excellent friend replied, without hesitation, "*Pro-*

*mise unto the Lord your God, and keep it.\** Such," he continued, "is God's own command in His holy word; but I may add, your promise and vow, while they are positively required by the Lord, can only be regarded by Him, and kept faithfully by yourself, in one way, and in one spirit. We have no wisdom in ourselves to direct ourselves, and no power in ourselves to help ourselves; but in the Lord God we have both wisdom and strength. He offers you that wisdom which is from above; He says, if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. He offers to work in you, to will and to do of His good pleasure. 'Make, therefore, your vows,' He seems to say, 'I require you to do so; but, beware! for, if made in the consciousness of your own strength to keep them, or if you strive to keep them in your own mere strength, you must fall—your vows must be broken.' There, however, is the direction you stand in need of," he said, and, opening the large Bible, that always lay on an old desk of carved oak, he found the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, and pointing to the last verses, he begged me to look at them. "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength: even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait

\* Psalm lxxvi. 11.

upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings, as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." "It is this waiting upon the Lord that I would earnestly recommend to you: do so, and you will find a way to keep your vows, for His strength is made perfect in weakness; vow to Him by all means—that is, make a solemn promise to God, that with His help you will break off for ever your besetting sin, whatever that sin may be—indeed, sin of every kind; but let the spirit in which the vow is made and kept be like the vow itself, according to the word of God. You know what our fine church catechism says, I dare say, about the manner of keeping our baptismal vows, and obeying God's commandment—'Know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to walk in the commandments of God, and to serve Him without His special grace; which thou must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer.' How apt we are to leave this catechism to our children, as if we had done with it, when come to man's estate. There would not be so many grown-up, trifling children as there are, with no more scriptural knowledge of God than that committed to memory, and, alas! too often, neither to mind, nor to heart, but to memory alone, if our church catechism were in the hands of grown-up persons. However, if the Bible is not prized, what can we hope for the catechism?"

I was much struck by the spirit in which Mr. Graham spoke. He joined us while we were conversing. I was struck, not only by his spirit on this, but on every other occasion. He was an acknowledged genius, a first-rate scholar, but of his genius and his scholarship (pretender as I had once been to superior powers) I was no judge; however, I could judge with what a humble and deep-pious spirit he spoke on all occasions. I saw in him the rare union of that which is noble in intellect with what is truly admirable in heart. I saw that his spirit had been renewed by that wisdom which is from above, and that in him the heart and moral disposition had been educated as highly as the powers of his mind. "I think," said Mr. Armstrong, continuing to address me, "that when you spoke of the resolution you have made before God, of living henceforth to Him, your expression was, 'I determined not only to give up the service of ungodliness, but that I would live a life devoted to God.' Now I may, perhaps, misunderstand your words, but they seem to contain an error. You will find it impossible to give up the service of ungodliness and sin without living a life devoted to God; and for this reason, in order to give up sin or ungodliness heartily, and with a cheerful resoluteness, a new principle from above must be at work within us;—this principle is the influence of the Holy Spirit." I have no doubt that I looked a little incredulous and careless, as if such an idea

was beyond me, or I might say as if I did not wish such a doctrine to be otherwise than beyond me. Mr. Graham observed my look, and said very gravely, "You think that Mr. Armstrong's remark savours of mysticism, and you are too reasonable to hold such opinions!"—"Why to tell you the truth," I replied, "I am a great stickler for reason, and do not like novelties in religion."—"Alas, to some of us, and perhaps to you, dear nephew," said Mr. Armstrong; "religion itself, and its old sound doctrines, seem novelties. To all men in their natural state the gospel is altogether a novelty, and, what is more, 'all things must become new, old things must pass away.' This doctrine, however, of the influence of the Holy Spirit is an old acknowledged doctrine, which you have often heard without objecting to it. Do you remember the parting words of the minister every time he concludes the service in the church? Will you repeat them, or shall I?"—"Do you mean, 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ?'" I said.—"Yes."—"Well, then," he continued.—"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be amongst you."—"The *'what'* of the Holy Ghost?" he asked.—"The fellowship," I replied.—"Have you ever objected to receiving this blessing?"—"I have not even given heed to the words till now," I said, "and I confess my ungodly heedlessness. I agree that you

are right, that this is our common profession, and I will read my Bible more diligently and attentively; and I do hope I shall not long remain so ignorant as I still am.”—“Do *you* believe this doctrine, Mr. Graham?” I said, turning to him.—“I believe it with all my heart,” he replied; “I could know neither the truth nor peace without the Holy Spirit. And you will agree with us,” he continued, “if you look into St. John’s Gospel for the words of our Lord Jesus Christ himself on this subject; that the Third Person in the Godhead, namely, the Holy Spirit, is the guide unto all truth, and the Comforter. I should recommend, if you have doubts on this subject, Mr. Forster, the study of the Gospel of St. John; and I do this because I have known the effect produced by the Gospel of St. John upon a decided unbeliever—I should rather say a decided Socinian—who spoke in a very slighting way of two most important doctrines of the Christian’s faith, the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the influences or operations of the Holy Spirit. The gentleman with whom he was conversing begged him to suspend the judgment which he passed so confidently till he had studied the Gospel of St. John. ‘I do not ask you,’ he said, ‘to read any book on the evidences. I do not even recommend you, on the present occasion, to turn to the epistles of St. Paul, deeply and heartily as I myself believe them—I entreat you to consider the words of our Lord

Jesus Christ Himself, the account He gives of His own person, and of His own doctrines.' The unbeliever of whom I speak was a sincere and truth-searching man ; he had no double end to gain, nor was he on the look-out for a religion to suit and square with the evil desires of his heart, or the bad practices of his life ; he did study the Gospel of St. John ; he did search its every page, its every sentence, with a calm and unprejudiced mind, humbly, and not without that child-like spirit, with which the creature should look into the will and the works of his Creator."—"And what was the effect and result produced by his search?" I inquired. Mr. Graham replied, in what seemed to me a very wise way, "This is the word of God : 'Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.' He obeyed this word, and so did the will of God, and the promise of God was fulfilled to him : 'If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.'"—"You tell me of another, Mr. Graham," I said ; "will you now tell me something of yourself? Have you never known doubts and difficulties in religion?"—"Indeed I have," he replied, frankly and modestly ; "but I might say, with Baxter, 'Of doubts and difficulties no man has known more than myself, which I have conquered, not in a martial posture, but on my knees.' Indeed, I may add, that I have learned, with the famous



Lord Bacon, one of the finest geniuses that ever lived, to say of my religion, 'In divinity many things must be left abrupt,' and concluded with this, 'O, the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unfathomable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out.' But let me beseech you to look well to the spirit with which you search into the things of God, for the chief difficulty lies in the disposition of the heart."

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We went with Mrs. Armstrong to the cottage of an old widow, who had been suddenly taken ill, and was then in a dying state. "You will see," she said, as we walked along, "the mother of Margaret's favourites, Jenny and Sally Buttery. Jenny is the dairy-maid who first welcomed you to the Hillside; indeed, your dear Margaret has insisted on taking their work by turns, while she remains at the farm, that they may give up as much of their time as possible to their mother. You will not wonder that these two sisters are such great favourites with us, when I tell you that they have been, perhaps, the best daughters in the parish to their aged parents. The father died only a year ago; but for the last fifteen years they have supported them upon their own hard earnings, and without receiving any parish relief. I do not say that we have neglected to assist the good old couple, but the chief burden has been upon Jenny and Sally themselves. Not

long ago, Jenny refused the second or third offer of marriage which she had received, and from a man who will never propose to another woman while she continues unmarried. They have been advised over and over again, by those who have no doubt felt rebuked by their pious and independent spirit, to send the old people to the poor-house; and they have had too many examples of very different children in the neighbourhood. Our poor-house at Hallowdine is a well-conducted and very comfortable home for aged and infirm paupers, but they would never hear of their parents leaving the old favourite cottage."

We found the poor old woman in a very feeble state, but perfectly calm, in full possession of her senses. Jenny was sitting at the foot of the bed, sobbing and weeping as if her heart would break; but she rose up on our entrance, and placed chairs for us, thanking her mistress for all favours, as she did so, and thanking me and my good wife for offering to take her work, and so managing to let her be there with her dear old mother. Both Margaret and her aunt promised that the sisters should be spared as often as possible, to be with their mother, and that one of them should be constantly with her. "Ye're come in time to comfort my poor wench," said the aged woman, who followed with her eyes every movement of her dutiful child, after she had welcomed us. "I canna do any thing with my poor Jenny; she does so cry and

wail about me ; she, too, that's used to be so wise and so cheery, and so well content with every thing ; and she knows whose love is in her trouble, and whose arms are under her old dying, failing, mother. You munna love your own will, my Jenny, better than the Lord's, and better than your mother's happiness." Jenny went to her mother, and kissed her poor thin face, and stayed her own lamentations ; and, as she put the pillows and the bed-clothes to rights, she promised her mother to strive with herself, and be mindful of her mother's wishes, and of her duty to God. Just then, the door opened, and Mr. Herbert, the minister, came in. We rose up to be going, but old Matty turned to the minister, and said, " Well, sir, you'll ask Margaret dear to stay with me, and join in a godly prayer with us : and, may be, the master would like to kneel down with his wife," she added, observing, probably, from my look, and from my not offering to go, that I was in no hurry to depart. " I have but a very short time to stay among you, Mr. Herbert," were Matty's first words, in reply to what he said to her, as he opened the Bible, and took his seat near the bed-head of the dying woman. " There has come a great change of weakness over me since you were with me yesterday. I am going fast. The Lord seems to speak in this weakness, and to bid me be ready."—" Tell me, dear Matty, what you feel most in need of ?" he said.—" Why," she replied, in a firm though faint

voice, "I want a more perfect trust in Him who is my strength, and my Redeemer. I cannot doubt His love. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him : but sometimes, when I think what a forgetful, graceless wretch I have been to Him—nay, what a guilty, worthless sinner I am in myself, it seems too wonderful a thing that I should be safe or saved."—"But how much higher are His thoughts and His ways than yours, Matty?"—"I know well what you mean, and where it is written," she said—"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts.'"—"And by whom are you saved?"—"Surely, by Him alone: He died for me, a lost sinner, and He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Forgiveness and repentance are both His gifts."—"And in whom must you abide, if you are safe?"—"I must abide in Him, as the branch abideth in the vine. Yes, sir, I know all this, but——" she stopped, and her poor lips trembled, and the tears gushed out from her eyes; her hands were held forth, and rested clasped upon the bed before her. She did not move them—she did not raise her eyes, but surely it was a prayer she offered, when she said, "Lord, I believe: help Thou mine unbelief." The words were breathed out in a very low voice, as if she was speaking to herself; and other words followed them, but I did not catch more than the murmur of them. Mr. Herbert did not make any

remark, but quietly and silently knelt down, and we all followed his example, and knelt down in silence; and then, as her words died away, he took up the prayer to the Father of mercies, and said—(the poor woman just raised her eyes, and smiled, as he began)—“ We have not chosen Thee, O gentle and most loving Saviour, but Thou hast chosen us : Thou hast laid Thy love upon us : Thou wouldst not that any one should perish. While we were yet without strength, while we were yet aliens, while we were yet enemies, Thou didst offer up a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for us ; while we were yet sinners, Thou didst die for the ungodly—and what are we in ourselves but sinners, and enemies, and ungodly aliens ? Thou hast said to each one of us, ‘ If I wash Thee not, thou hast no part with me.’ Give unto each of us the personal application of this most holy washing ; that, being now brought near by the blood of Thy cross, we may have confidence to come boldly to the throne of grace, not only while we now kneel before Thee, and pray to Thee, and, in Thy name, to our Father, but that we may be permitted and enabled to rejoice, although with trembling, as being no longer under the curse, no longer in our sins, but as washed, but as sanctified, but as justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, as indeed accepted in Him, who is *our* Head, and *Thy* beloved Son, and by the Spirit of our God. O Lord of all power

and might, 'tis easy work for thee to save and deliver, to receive and comfort us. Be it unto us, therefore, according to Thy gracious word—that word which assures us that Thou art both able and willing to do for us above all that we can ask or think, according to Thy riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.”

When Mr. Herbert had done praying, he took up the Bible again. “I will only read three verses to you, my beloved friend,” he said: “you know them well, perhaps, but we will consider them again. But tell me, first, do I fatigue you? Shall I leave off?”—“Indeed, you do not,” she replied; “it is better to me *till* food!”—“The verses I speak of, are the second and third verses of the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John: ‘Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God: He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments, and took a towel, and girded himself. After that, He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash His disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded.’” After reading these words, he turned to the dying woman, and he begged her to observe what a gentle and tender friend she had in her Lord, and that the same kind and gentle friend was the one God and Ruler of all, and over all. “You have in Him,” he said, “the utmost of human kindness, and of heavenly might. Jesus, knowing

that, according to the council of the eternal God-head, that is, of Himself, and His Father, and the Holy Spirit—Jesus, knowing that He was Head over all things, and without Him was not any thing made that was made—Jesus, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, for He was God, yet did He stoop to the lowliest offices of love for us. We must form Bible notions of His love, Matty, if we would hold right notions ; otherwise, we shall not think high enough of His majesty, nor humbly enough of his lowliness and human tenderness.

“ They say that the children of the Lord, when about to depart from this world of sense and sight, have seen by the gaze of faith, the gloomy chamber filled with troops of heavenly visitants, the angels of life in their white and glistening garments, waiting, with smiles of encouragement, to bear the departing spirit to the Paradise of God. But there is even a lovelier and more encouraging view of the gracious care of the Lord over His children, when called to pass through the dark valley of the shadow of death ;” and then he turned to the twelfth chapter of St. Luke, and said, “ Think of this part of Scripture, in connexion with the account of our Lord’s washing His disciples’ feet, which I have already read to you. ‘ Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding : that when He

cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.'

"My beloved friends," he said, and he looked, not only on the aged woman, but his look of affectionate kindness rested for a moment upon us all: "We do not indeed consider, as we ought to do, the tender care of our gentle Saviour, towards every sheep of his fold. Blessed, indeed, is that servant whom his Lord shall find watching. Suppose, at this moment, that you were to see a glorious king, coming into your sick chamber, my poor Matty, one whom you had looked for as your best friend, whom you anxiously desired to behold, but whose presence you thought would be terrible, from its exceeding majesty and greatness—how would you feel, when you saw only smiling goodness upon that noble countenance, and heard words of sweet encouragement from his gracious lips? Yes, if he were to say, 'I am your Master and your Lord; but I come to wait upon you as your servant. Fear not, I will take my quiet watch beside your bed. I will smooth your pillow, and hold the refreshing cup to your parched lips; your drooping head shall rest upon my bosom: I, even I, will receive your parting spirit, and bear it with me to Paradise.' "There is, indeed, no office of love and care so low



that He will not do for you; and he graciously bids you not to fear, for it is His Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom: nay, as a king you shall reign, and be glorified with God's anointed Son. Not only may you look forward," he added, "to the enjoyment of those things which God hath prepared for them that love him, things that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, no, nor hath it entered into your heart to conceive: but you may be assured, that for the comfort of the present trying hour, He is near you, He is with you, my beloved friend; smiling upon you, feeling for you and with you. He is touched with the fellow-feeling of your infirmities; for He has been tried and tempted in all points, like as you are, yet without sin; and for this very end, that He may be able to succour you in your most trying hour of temptation."

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If Mr. Herbert had known before-hand the feelings of my heart, he could not have brought before me a subject more likely to seize my attention, and draw my heart to him. It was that very passage of St. John's Gospel, from which my father had given me the Scripture lesson on humility. I think I mentioned it at the beginning of this narrative. I needed, perhaps, a lesson on that subject more than on any other, but I had not long begun to profit by it.

A few days after the visit we had paid to the

dying woman, I saw her lifeless body laid out for the grave. I walked over to Shrewsbury, to execute a commission for Mrs. Armstrong, namely, to buy a stout black stuff for Jenny and her sister, which we took to the cottage the same evening, where both the sisters had gone after milking-time, to look over some of their late mother's things. While we were there, a knock was heard at the door, and when it was opened, the village undertaker and one of his men entered with the coffin. The sisters were looking very sad and heavy-hearted when we came in; but the yards of black stuff had brought some cheerful looks into their faces. When, however, the coffin was brought in, I expected a burst of grief from them; but though Jenny did not smile, her voice and manner were more cheerful than I had yet seen them, as she bade the men set down the coffin, and then examined every part of it. The undertaker pointed out to her how he had obeyed her order in every particular, and made every part of the best seasoned wood, and how he had met with a remnant of white cloth for the lining, which was worth twice the money he gave for it. "I don't remember," he said, "if you ordered a shroud for the corpse, Jenny, but my mistress bids me say, that if you wish for one, she will be sure and cut one out for this evening."—"No, William," she answered, "we shall put on one of poor mother's long night-gowns, and one of her neat caps. I am glad you have not brought a shroud, though,

in my trouble, I forgot to tell you we did not wish for one."

As we were walking home, I said to my wife, "I am quite surprised, Margaret, to see that your friends feel so little at the sight of their mother's coffin; really the black stuff for mourning and the coffin, seemed to make Jenny quite cheerful. For my part, when my father's coffin was carried up stairs, I shook almost as much as poor aunt Merridew did, who was always a tender *shakey* sort of a creature." — "You had plenty of money to spare for your father's coffin, dear Reuben," she said, "and the thought of the price never crossed your mind, but those two sisters are paying for the coffin out of their own hard-earned savings, instead of going to the parish, as many daughters in the present day would have done. They feel the comfort and the credit of having supported their aged mother independently of the parish till the very last, and did you mark with what a look Jenny untied her purse, and paid the ready money for the coffin? for she had ordered the bill to be brought with it.

"Besides," continued Margaret, "I could pledge my word for it, that Jenny and her sister had higher thoughts to make them feel calm and even happy, at this trying time. They both told me last night, that they quite wondered at their feeling so contented and so comforted, for they had looked forward to this time as one of very great distress; but, after seeing their mother depart,

in such a blessed and peaceful state, they felt it to be the duty of a grateful heart, to rejoice even in their sorrowing."

"My great endeavour," said Jenny, "is to raise my thoughts from this poor shell of the body to the blessed spirit, and when I look up to her, with her gracious Lord in Paradise, I can wipe away the tears that are falling over the corpse, and think to myself of the time when I and my sister may be called to join her and all the dear and blessed ones who have gone before her."

"There is the fruit of bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," said Mr. Armstrong, as the conversation after supper turned upon the Buttery family. "As Mr. Herbert says, 'when I enter a cottage, I can always tell from what kind of family the master and mistress have come.' There are Jenny and Sally Buttery: you will see what orderly, happy children theirs will be, if, please God, they marry and settle among us, and have families; and, no doubt, Jenny will marry, though Sally is more of an old maid in her ways and notions. And, look again, there are the Martins! James and Nanny Martin, for instance, are as hard-working and honest a couple as any in the parish, but their children are the plagues of the village, and under no control either at home or abroad. I can tell the reason—the father and mother belonged to families where God was neither regarded nor worshipped. Of course they had not

a thought to teach their children what they had never been taught when young. No blessed example comes down from their parents through them, unto their children." The master of a family has, indeed, an important calling to fulfil.

"There's a fine picture," said Mr. Graham, "of a godly family in humble life, which people of all classes might read with advantage and take pattern by: it is in 'The Cotter's Saturday Night,' by Robert Burns, himself a peasant;" and then he repeated parts of the poem, of which we could all feel the truth and the beauty:—

The cheerful supper done, wi' serious face,  
They round the ingle form a circle wide;  
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,  
The big ha' Bible, once his father's pride:  
His bonnet reverently is laid aside,  
His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare;  
Those strains that once in Zion sweet did glide,  
He wales a portion with judicious care;  
And, 'Let us worship God!' he says, with solemn air.

"What is the meaning of the hard words, Mr. Graham?" said the mistress, "for, much as I admire the verses, there are one or two words quite beyond me."—"The 'lyart haffets,' you mean," he replied. "I believe they are the thin grey locks on the temples."—"Yes," she said, "and, what is the meaning of 'he wales a portion'?"—"To 'wale,' is to choose," he said.—"Is there no more of the poem that we should like to hear?" was Mr. Arm-

strong's question ; and Mr. Graham then repeated the whole, explaining all the hard words, to the satisfaction of more of us than Mrs. Armstrong. The master was particularly struck by the expression " The priest-like father," as applied to the humble cotter, and the mention of the private prayer offered by the parents in their chamber :—the prayer,

That He who stills the raven's clamorous nest,  
And decks the lily fair in flowery pride,  
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,  
For them and for their little ones provide ;  
But chiefly in their hearts with *grace* divine preside.

and again, that noble verse—

O Scotia ! my dear, my native soil !  
For whom my warmest wish to heaven is sent !  
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil  
' Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content,'  
And O may Heaven their simple lives prevent  
From luxury's contagion weak and vile !  
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,  
A virtuous populace may rise the while,  
And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd isle.

" There's as much dignity about that honest hard-working peasant," said Mr. Graham, " as there is about a king upon his throne, and more in some respects, for it is not helped out, or held up by the glitter of a crown, or the submissive attendance of courtiers. The man stands forth alone in the plain dignity of manliness, and the nobility of manliness is above all earthly nobility."

“No, not merely the dignity of the man, but of the calling, because a low calling, well filled, is above the highest station that is but poorly filled.”

“Did I say the man stands forth in manliness alone? I should rather have said, that real manliness is the fruit of godliness in the heart. No Christian,—observe, I say Christian,—can be really manly who is not a man of God; for the Christian, who is not a godly man, is false to his profession, or, in other words, but in an awful sense, he is a traitor both to God and man.”

Then we all moved from the huge, solid table of polished oak, which extends along one side of the kitchen, and round which we all, servants and all, had been seated at supper, and Mr. Armstrong, himself, the priest-like father of the church in his house, opened the big hall-bible, which always lay upon the oaken-desk near the window, and read a portion of God’s message to man. We kneeled down, every servant of the household with us, and the evening prayer closed the day.

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“You are pleased with the orderly and pious habits of our family,” said Mr. Armstrong, on another occasion, turning to me; “but it would not have been what it is, had not the master been under the direction of such a pastor as Mr. Herbert. All our old ways at the farm were not good ways. God forbid that we should part with such old ways as are honest and English, and at the

same time godly ; but when Mr. Herbert first came among us, I found that if I would serve God, I must get rid of many old prejudices, and adopt many new notions, and many new ways. I remember almost the first visit he paid us : he was then a young man, and his lady, now with God, was then a bride, as sweet and smiling as Miss Rose, and I and my dear Mary had been married but a few years. I had been showing him that old square copy of Baxter's *Saints' Rest*, which you were looking over last night. ' I might preach to you out of your own book,' he said, and opening it, he read from the dedication. ' Be sure that you make conscience of the great duties that you are to perform in your families. Teach your children and servants the knowledge and fear of God ; do it early and late, in season and out of season. Pray with them daily and fervently. Remember Daniel's example, Dan. vi., and the commands, 1 Thess. v. 17. Read the scripture and good books to them ; restrain them from sin ; keep not a servant that will not learn and be ruled. Neighbours, I charge you, as you will shortly answer the contrary before the Lord, your judge.' Mary put a marker into the book immediately, and when the good man and his lady were gone, we read over the passage, and turned to the two parts of scripture recommended, and often and often have we looked upon the same words, and what I trust was far better, we were soon after led, by other discourses with him,



and by his sermons from the pulpit, to bring his advice into our daily practice. He asked us all from the pulpit, how we could expect to find good faith and affectionate obedience from our servants and children, unless we shewed the same to our Master in Heaven, at the hand of His minister; reminding us, that neither the peace of God, nor the blessing of God, could be present with any family where God was not looked up to, through those who stand to their families in His stead, as their great Head. Many were thus led to see that their own interest called upon them to conform to the will of the Lord; and as for the continuance of these habits, I believe it has been generally found, that the man, who begins by denying himself, in order that he may walk in God's ways, always find the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, in those sacred ways. He is continually reminding us that we belong, each one of us, to the great body of the church of God, and so have each an appointed place and calling in that church. He bids us know our own peculiar calling to God, and seek to do our duty in, and not out of that calling. As for himself, his care is, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood."\*

"Your vicar," said Mr. Graham to our worthy host, "puts me very much in mind of the character drawn by one who filled, not only the same

\* Acts xx. 28.

sacred office, but bore the same name. Have you ever met with Herbert's Country Parson? It is a book," he continued, "well known to me; for my good mother, to whom I owe, not only a deep debt of gratitude for her care and instruction, but many of the most delightful associations of my early life, always treasured up a little old copy of Herbert's Poems and his Country Parson. I love the church of England, and I love, in these times, when there are so many who would willingly make havoc of our church, to go into some little country parish, like this of Hallowdine for instance, and to observe the influence of the country parson when he feels the advantages of his high position in society, and endeavours to perform it. I am not a good judge as to the various abuses which are said to call for a reform in the church. Where reform is needed, I certainly hope it may be brought about, but all my hope is, that our establishment will not be meddled with by those who would cry down establishments of every kind, and that the godless and profane may not be permitted to lay their hands upon our ark.

"I should say that the secret of Mr. Herbert's success among you, is not only to be set down to his great kindness and the remarkable sweetness of his disposition and manner, but to the straightforward simplicity with which he preaches Christ to his flock. He is truly a wise minister, but his wisdom is according to the estimate that God takes of wisdom: 'He that winneth souls is wise.' I should

say that he wrote 'tenderness,' at the head of every sermon he preaches, still there is no time-serving or trimming to please man, in any sermon that he preaches. He shows that he has not only received God's word, but with it, that command, 'He that hath my word, let him preach it faithfully.'"

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The day before the wedding of George Armstrong and Lucy, Mrs. Graham, the mother of the bride, came to join the party at the Hillside. George Armstrong met her with his uncle's chaise, at Shrewsbury. I could account for many of the rare and excellent qualities in her son, Mr. Graham, when I saw his mother. He was the son of a religious mother, and of one who, like himself, would have done honour to any station. I never met with a person in whom there appeared so little guile and so little selfishness, or one who seemed to have unlearned so much of that natural character which is degenerate and fallen, and to have put on in its place so many of those sweet and artless graces which are natural only to the regenerate character. Her very countenance and person, though at the time I met her she was more than fifty years of age, and never could have been a handsome woman, had a freshness and delicacy about them quite extraordinary; the great proof of her sweetness of character was, that the young and the timid seemed always drawn to her as if they felt assured, at first sight, that they had met with a friend. She was by

no means an educated person, and had read few books but the Bible. It was, however, a maxim of hers, that one kind of education was indispensably necessary in the lowest as well as in the highest classes, a kind of education that many seem with one consent to forget—the education of the heart, in order to its being enriched with the heavenly moralities of godliness; and, thus, when her son left her to begin his splendid course at college, she gave him the same parting charge which she had given to him when he entered the wholesale warehouse at Liverpool as a clerk. It was this,—to attend chiefly to the education of his heart, and to distrust and esteem lightly, every man and book, however celebrated, by which God, even the Christ of God, was not acknowledged and honoured and glorified.

It was quite delightful to see the love and respect of Mr. Graham to his mother, and the perfect ease with which she seemed to keep her place, uneducated as she was, as his mother. He treated her with reverence and tender respect, though there was evidently an understanding that they stood also to one another in the relation of friend to friend. He would have said to her, had she spoken of his superiority to herself in point of mere mental gifts, as he did say to Mr. Armstrong, when some remark had been made about his being a man of superior talent and learning, “There is not an old day-labourer who cannot even read the alpha-

bet, to whom we scholars might not confess an inferiority, for he has gathered in a golden store of experience."

Our stay at the Hillside was unexpectedly prolonged, by the serious illness with which I was attacked, the day before that on which we proposed to return home. Good Mrs. Armstrong was the first to find out that I was unwell, and she made me drink a draught or two of balm tea, and sent me to bed early. The next morning, though I felt very unwell, I came down, as usual, to breakfast, and fully intended to set off on my return, at an early hour. My dear wife, however, was alarmed at my flushed and feverish appearance; and when the master felt my pulse, he declared, and all the party with him, that I should not leave the house, so sent me back again to bed. I was very ill, and was soon brought down, as it seemed to me, to the sides of the grave. Oh! what a poor, wretched, helpless creature, even a strong man is, when his bodily health begins to fail! For some days I lay tossing and turning, with a high fever, the least noise distracting me, but thinking, with a sharp and restless intensity, till my head seemed splitting, even to bursting. The best advice was called in, and it pleased God to bless the means used for my recovery.

At last my disorder began to abate. The fever left me, but left me weak and wasted, and scarcely able to take such nourishment as was absolutely

necessary to support life. As I sat up, supported by pillows, at the open window of my pleasant chamber, it seemed to me almost impossible that I should ever regain any thing like manly health and vigour. I almost doubted whether I had ever known what health was. I had a confused recollection of having seen Mr. Herbert during my illness; and, in fact, he had been more than once to visit me and to pray by my side. His name, as I was now told, had been often on my lips, and my illness was the means of bringing me to a personal acquaintance with him. Shall I own, that my disposition (much as I esteemed and respected him before my illness) was decidedly opposed to seeking an interview with him, or frankly telling him my story and asking his advice. The pride of human nature is past belief!—Almost the first words I addressed to Mr. Herbert, when I was conscious of his presence, were to ask him if he remembered entering a shop in — street, while in London not many months before, and holding a conversation with the master of the shop, which lasted a considerable time. “I do, indeed,” replied Mr. Herbert, much surprised, as he might well be, at the question; “but I do not see how you are likely to know any thing of that conversation; for, if I am not mistaken, no one entered the shop during the whole of the time I remained there, except, perhaps, the good woman of the house, who came out from a little dark parlour behind the

shop, and passed through quickly into the street, nor did she return while I was there.”—“ You saw no one in that back room, sir,” I replied, “ but I sat there quiet, with` breathless attention ; and the words I then heard, though I soon after turned to ridicule them, sunk deep into my heart. It would be wrong in me to depart from your sheep-fold, where I have been permitted to feed with your own flock, without telling you that I now feel and trust, that you have been the means of converting a sinner from the error of his ways, and saving a soul from death.”—“ Then,” said Mr. Herbert, “ there was another present. I looked for Him all the time ; He was surely present, and He has taught you.” I did not quite understand him. “ Do you mean that God was present, good sir ?” I said.—“ I do mean that He was present, and that He took the work in hand, which I engaged in to His honour. This astonishes and delights me. I do not wish to hide from you the unaffected joy I feel. As for myself, I am indeed honoured, and as an instrument favoured and blessed beyond what I dared to think. But, my friend, if you are able, if you can bear the exertion, tell me more, nay, all about yourself and your concerns, and your acquaintance with Mr. Collinson, the bookseller? (is not Collinson the name?) How came you acquainted with him? and when? Tell me all that you may like to let me hear; for, though I must rejoice at having been myself made an honoured

instrument in God's hand, to do you good, the great subject of my rejoicing must be, and is, your recovery from error and from sin. What did you yourself do? for you said, just now, that at first you joined in ridiculing my sentiments!"—"I did simply (though not at that time) what you advised, sir," I replied; "I asked to be taught of God; I prayed for faith which you spoke of as such a great gift. I thought till then that a change of heart would come at my bidding, and that God might be put out of the question altogether in that bidding, nay, that it would come when I pleased to wish for it."—"And so," said Mr. Herbert, "in one sense it might come at your wish; but, though I would not clog the free offer of the gospel, still, I may say again, Faith is a great gift. It may please God to bestow that gift unsought on many; but, according to His own gracious appointment, a condition generally attends it; not a condition requiring anything meritorious on man's part, but one which, so far from putting in any claim as to merit, is, when we comply with it, a proof that we confess our utterly helpless state. I had better give you the answer from our Lord's own lips;" and he read from the Bible these words: 'If thou knewest the gift of God, thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.\*' "It is then to confess your dependence on God by asking from Him those things, and that great gift above

\* John iv. 10.



all, which He is, at the same time, more ready to give than we are to seek. He calls upon us to give up our fatal claim to being independent of Him; and, still more for our profit than for His pleasure, does He require us to ask, in humble, child-like dependence, the very things which He determines, before our asking, to give us. It was, I suppose, the rule in your father's house, Mr. Forster, as it was in mine, for the little child to take neither food, nor clothing, nor money, without asking for it, though there was always a feeling and conviction in both households, of our fathers' tender love and willingness to give, and this condition or rule was as much for our benefit as to our parents' honour; without it we should have grown up with no clear notion of the rights of property, and neither in habits of order nor of respect towards our superiors. You will not think me wearying if I read to you another passage from this Holy Volume, which you will agree to be full of instruction and comfort on this point: 'If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or, if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.\*' In order to receive we have only to ask. There is such perfect

\* Luke xi. 11, 12, 13.

holiness about the Lord our God, that He can make no terms with sin of any kind ; but His great desire is to bring sinners to terms with Him, and to save their souls alive."

I told Mr. Herbert, as he requested, much of the history of my past life, and answered his many questions on the conversation which I had heard between Mr. Collinson and himself. He wished to know if any change had taken place in the sentiments of Collinson. I could not tell him, for I had seen none during the remainder of my stay in London. I only knew that Collinson, though prejudiced and self-conceited, appeared a kind and amiable man.—"I could come to no conclusion about his opinions," said Mr. Herbert, "but that there was no philosophic arrangement about them. I hope you'll forgive my using learned words, Mr. Forster ; but when your friend talked of metaphysics,\* I may use the word philosophy. I found an utter inconsistency in what he said. At one time he seemed to value the Gospel dispensation ; at another he questioned even the existence of God. His opinions seemed like a shifting quicksand. Do you know much of the opinions of the party to which he belongs, Mr. Forster ?" I told him what I knew ; but I found, on endeavouring to give anything like a plain and intelligible statement, either that I had never had any clear notion of them my-

\* A fact—I have also been asked by an English wheelwright what I thought of Voltaire's 'Candide?'

self, or that I had attempted a task somewhat like that of a painter, who should endeavour to copy the form of a cloud, changing with every look he turned upon it.

“I certainly did not expect,” said Mr. Herbert, “when I went to that shop, prepared for the common ribaldry of the godless and profane, to receive a lecture on the inferiority of Christian morality to that of this new party. I heard, I suspect, the language of a set of persons, who are sometimes called Universalists or Optimists, and who do not differ very materially in some points from the St. Simonians. As to some of their opinions, I might say, however, as an accomplished author of the present day says of the followers of St. Simon,\* ‘In attending to them, we gain, from persons who are no friends to Christianity, the direct avowal and most ingenuous proof, that the present improved state of society is owing to Christianity alone; that the leaven which leavens the whole lump is the leaven of the Gospel; that the only principles which have ever tended to relieve the poor, the miserable, the oppressed, and to introduce kindly feelings among mankind, have come from the Gospel alone. We find, that when devisi some higher and better motives for the guidance of society, they have nothing new to bring forward; but rest entirely on a misapprehension and perver-

\* See “The Gospel an Abiding System,” page lxii, &c.  
“By Hugh James Rose, B.D.,” for these admirable remarks.

sion of the principles of the Gospel. We find them stating that the church of Christ is the only institution which ever undertook the guidance of society on right principles, or which addressed itself to the right quarters of the human heart—while earthly systems of legislations in proportion as they have departed from these principles, have become unable to guide man aright. We find them stating, that in proportion as men have renounced that spirit of faith in God, and His providential care, which the Gospel inculcates, they have become selfish, earthly, sensual, devilish ! that the heart of man cannot endure to live without faith and hope ; and that if it is compelled so to live, it loses all impress of divine character ; it communicates its own misery to society ; and that individuals and the community alike become debased and miserable. They appeal for proof of all this to the society in which they and those whom they address are living ; or rather, what is still stronger, they assume, on the one hand, the godless and incredulous tone, and on the other, the selfishness and misery of that society, as a fact so well known and so wholly undisputed, that it requires explanation, but *not proof*.”

Many conversations took place in my chamber, which I often think over with no little satisfaction, and from which I have received, I trust, much real and spiritual benefit. As I grew stronger, sometimes one and sometimes another of the kind and excellent family at the Hillside would come up and sit

with me, and bear a part in my converse with Mr. Herbert. One day the conversation had turned on the aspect of the present times.—“There are, indeed, many evils to be remedied in society,” said Mr. Armstrong; “and who can say where they are to end, if things go on as they do.”—“That is not spoken in your usual spirit of high hope and Christian confidence, my good friend,” replied Mr. Herbert. “We had better never see the evils in their true shape, if we are to sit down in unmanly despair at the sight of them. The discovery of evil, whether in our heart or in our social life, should rouse us to new exertion to get rid of it, God working with us. When we begin to fear, we ought, in fact, to feel as if a call had come to us for renewed applications to God, the God of all hope, the only wise God, our only guide, our only guard, our only Saviour. People tell the truth who complain of the times, of distress, of the abuse of the poor laws, and of other popular grievances; and we cannot mourn too sincerely or too heartily over every kind of error and over every kind of sin; but so far from sitting down, with our hands folded in silent despair; we should rise up, and be doing; taking this as our motto, ‘Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.’”—“Surely, sir,” I ex-

claimed, "you would not say that man is to make no exertions himself?"—"Did I not bear my testimony," he replied, smiling, "within this very minute, against folded hands and silent despair? Let all the skill of man, all the powers of his highest intellect be combined, with every effort of his manual exertions, to devise and to execute the wisest plans for the reform of evil and the attainment of good; but let us not rest here. Man, with all his resources and all his powers, cannot fulfil the duties of his calling unless he considers himself as intended to be the instrument of God. His exertions are not to have self as their end, but God. The unheeded word of God tells us the simple truth, and gives us the really profitable advice, when it sets before us the counsel of Him who is One in the councils of the Godhead. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' 'The wisdom of many of our modern economists,' it has been said, 'is, that a man should see, in those who embark in the same career with himself, only enemies, whom he is to watch—nay, too often to ruin, if he can. His family, his machinery, and his own fortune, make up his view of humanity, his universe, and his God. *Let things alone*; give no directions, no advice, no help—this is their wisdom. These guides of society cry out, Let every one take care of himself; and the members of it separate with the cry, *Each* for

himself, and God for nobody.' For my part," continued Mr. Herbert, " I agree with a sentiment which I remember to have been much pleased with, in Cecil's Remains—I do not exactly remember his words. Often when I feel disposed to give way to a doubtful mind, and to see things in a dark and dismal point of view, I encourage myself by an immediate view of God acting in all public affairs, and then all the great men who make such a noise and bustle on the scene seem to me like so many mere puppets in his hands. God is moving them all, or rather preventing one from moving, otherwise than according to His permission. They cannot advance a step without Him. Yes—the heathen may rage furiously, the people may imagine a vain thing, and the rulers might take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed ;' but in what a calm and assured authority does the great God declare, ' Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.' The Son of Man, as the great Head of heaven and earth, may be despised and rejected in His followers, and in His gospel message now, as He was in His own person in the old times ; but He is still the Prince of the kings of the earth, and a time will be, when every one that hath pierced Him shall see Him coming in the clouds to judgment. The crying sin of this our Christian country is an independence of Christ as foolish as it is fatal. In Him we live and move and have our being ; unless we abide in

Him, we can do nothing. I do heartily wish that our great men and our wise men could see the *expediency*, in the highest sense of that prostituted word, of acknowledging Christ in all their ways; for He would then direct their paths. There is an unmanly shame of confessing Him to be the Lord, that is, the Sovereign Master, as if the confession were only fit for weak and narrow minds, for bigots, or fools, or mere enthusiasts. O! for a healthier, manlier, spirit among the great men of our country!" — "I perfectly agree with you, sir," said George Armstrong, who came in while Mr. Herbert was speaking: "but have we not enough religious display already in the world? Are there not many more professors than there used to be in your younger days? and have I not heard you complain of the cant which is now so common?" — "You have, indeed, my dear George," replied Mr. Herbert, mildly; "and I would always set my face against religious display, and mere cant, and the unhealthy tone of religious society in many places: but I do hope and pray to see more and more of real, healthy, manly godliness in every rank and grade of society, from the highest to the lowest. After all, my dear George, when you have lived as long in this poor, foolish world as I have, you will learn to take human beings as they are, and rather to pity than to quarrel with the weak heads and the narrow minds of some religious professors. It would be very desirable to find as much wisdom



among the children of light as among the children of this world, who are merely wise in their generation; but it is an old complaint brought against them, and I suppose it may continue to be urged till the end of time. Still, there is no reason why more wisdom, and more humility, and more love, and more consistency, should not be sought, and sought incessantly, by all to whom their Christian faith is dear as life itself. In the meantime, the cry to the people of God may be—Every man to his place, every man to his station; for it is in a man's own station, that he must do his duty as a minister of the body politic."

"You are a politician, I see, sir," I said to Mr. Herbert.—"I am a politician," he replied, "and I think that every man ought to be a politician; though I suspect, my good friend, that you do not quite apprehend in what sense I should wish every one to be a politician. Certainly, I do not wish to see every individual, to whatever station he may belong, busying himself with schemes for the alteration of the laws and institutions of his country; but there is a sphere of public life, of wide extent to some, of narrow extent to others—and these spheres form the stations in which one or other of us are called upon to move. Do we wish to know our duty? it is, to keep in our own sphere, to seek there the reform of what may need reforming. You would think your shepherd a very meddling fellow, Mr. Armstrong, if he were to leave his flock in

their pastures, and to insist on living in my parsonage, and preaching from my pulpit, if he occupied himself among my books and papers, till he altered the places of all of them, which it might be possible to do without making any improvement in their order. Station and the duty that attaches to station, is but too little attended to in the present day. I might say, almost in the words of the inspired volume, 'All seek their own,' to do their own pleasure, to gain their own selfish ends, and the consequence is, the unhingement of society, while the restless and presuming individual, who thus idly, nay, sinfully leaves his station and his duties, meets with nothing but vexation and vanity of spirit."—"But how is it," I said, "according to your system, in the case of such an individual as Mr. Graham? Do you think he would have occupied his proper sphere had he remained in his father's shop to carry on the business for his widowed mother?" "The exception to the rule," said Mr. Herbert, "never sets aside the rule itself: Mr. Graham is a real genius, and not only has the Providence of God so arranged it, but according to the liberal institutions of this enlightened country, a road is always left open by which the man of real genius may pass, even from the lowest hovel of the land, to the most exalted station beneath the throne; and I should think that individuals may always be found, like the friends of Mr. Graham, who will not only forbear from putting any obstacle in his

way, but will gladly give their money and their influence to place the man of genius in the sphere which he will be certain to adorn. I could mention many instances, even of the present day, of men—you must have heard of some—who have risen from the lower classes of society, and whose names, like those of Mr. Graham or the late Sir Humphry Davy, have caused their country to be honoured for their sakes.

“ We have not only a separate sphere or station, in which we are, each one of us, called to do our duty, but we all, and our several spheres of duty, belong to one body politic, the church of God, which is the great body of all faithful men, who are united one with another as the members of a human body are one with the other, and are all united under one head, namely, Christ ; who is to the Church, or spiritual body, what the head is to the natural body. ‘ The head being,’ as it has been well expressed, ‘ of all other parts of the body most divine, hath on every occasion, in every transaction of business, dominion over all the rest ; it is the fountain of sense of motion ; the throne where the guide of the soul doth reign ; the court from whence direction of all things human proceedeth. Christ is to the Church this Spiritual Head, and dominion belongeth to his Kingly Office ; Propitiation unto his Priestly ; instruction unto his Pastoral and Prophetical Office.’ ”\*

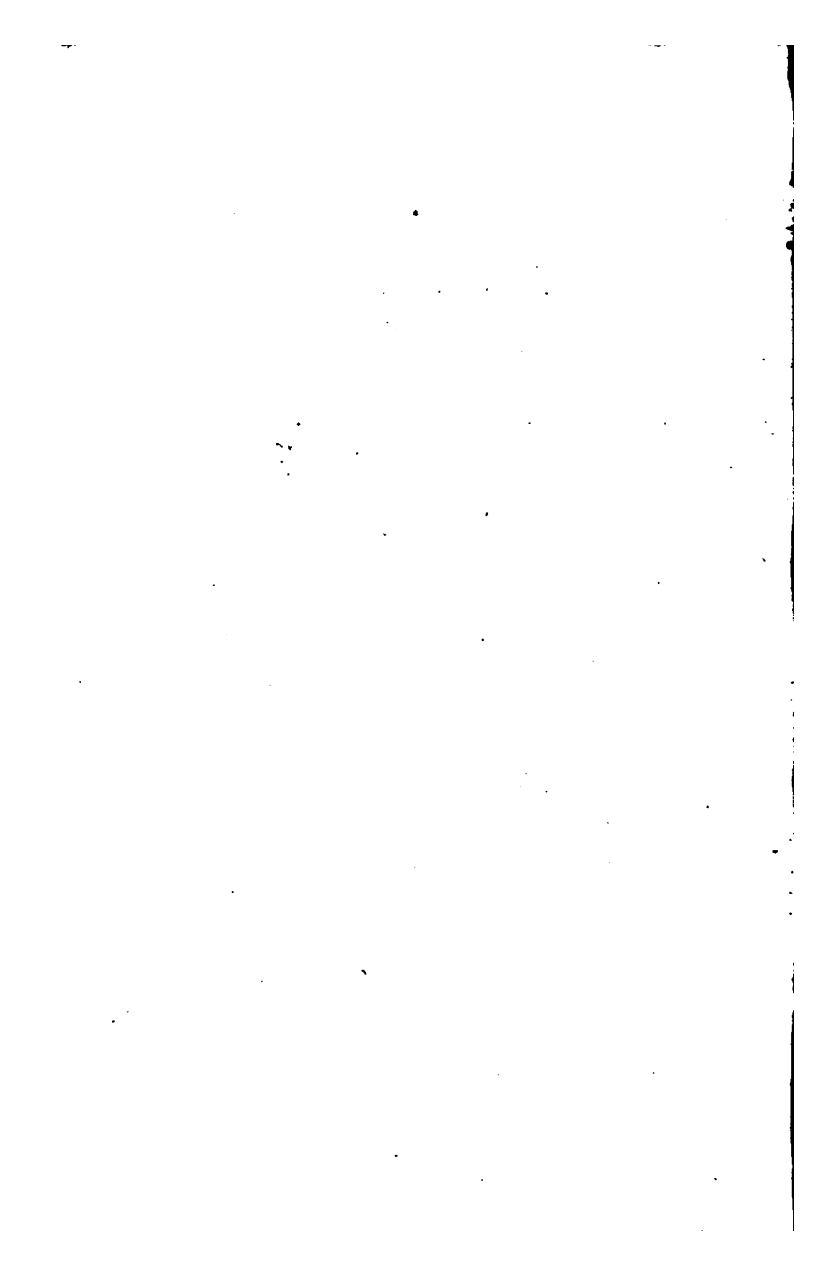
We left Hallowdine ; but before Mr. Herbert took leave of Margaret and me, he kneeled down and prayed with us ; taking my hand, he said, “ You are now a religious professor ; do not shrink from avowing that you are so ; remember, indeed, that every man calling himself Christian, makes the highest possible profession. Many will be on the watch for your halting, for the ungodly are never better pleased than when they can point to the failings of a professed Christian, and put it to the world to decide, whether *they* cannot be as moral and as upright without the Gospel, as religious persons with it. You are to show your religion, not in look, not in word, not in form, but in deed and in truth—by whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report—for as the Prophet has said, and I wish we religious people turned more frequently to His admonition, What is the vine more than another tree, unless, indeed, it bring forth fruit ?—its fruit is that which makes it valuable.—You will, I trust, study that fifteenth chapter of Ezekiel.”

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I am now once more at home, settled down quietly and contentedly to the business of my honest calling. I could not help feeling how much I should miss my excellent guide and friend, Mr. Herbert ; and while at Hallowdine I told him so, and said, “ My character has been too like that of one whose name I

bear. My father might have said of me as the aged Jacob said of his first-born, ‘ Reuben, unstable as water, thou shalt not succeed.’ ”—“ My good friend,” he replied, with great kindness, “ I shall always bless God for making me an instrument of good to you ; but I cannot take any credit to myself for this, and I wish you to bear in mind, that the best instrument without God’s grace can do nothing; while the meanest instrument must succeed if God be with it. Remember, also, that He who can bless through means, and by the weak instrument which he employs, can bless without any. He is ever near to you, though I, your earthly friend, may be separated from you. I may say to you, in the words of one of our fine old Homilies, ‘ Either God Almighty will send you some godly teacher to instruct you, or else God himself from above will give light into your mind, and teach you those things which are necessary for you, and wherein you are ignorant.’ ”

THE END.



## THE LADY AND THE LADY'S MAID.

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### CHAPTER I.

“ Live while you live ! the worldly man would say,  
And seize the pleasures of the present day.  
Live while you live ! the sacred preacher cries,  
And give to God each moment as it flies.  
Lord ! in my view, let both united be ;  
I live in pleasure, while I live to Thee.”

No class has been more slandered in the present day, than the Aristocracy of England. There may be some individuals among them much to be wondered at, and more to be pitied on account of their foolish pride ;—but pride does not belong to any particular class of society, and, perhaps, it is more excusable among those who, from the accident of birth, are surrounded from their infancy with all sorts of incentives to pride, than among others. There may be one or two sets among the aristo-

cratic party, that have become at the same time objects of supreme admiration, and of dislike to those who grieve to find themselves excluded from all intercourse with them ; and these exclusive sets may attract much notice by the noise and the display of their supereminent follies. Still one or two such sets do not constitute the nobility of England. They that form their opinion, and pass their judgment upon our nobility from fashionable novels, and from certain low and scurrilous journals, are not only mistaken in their opinion, but unjust in their judgment : that figure of speech, by which a part is made to represent the whole, ought not to be used in speaking of the high in rank and station among our countrymen. We should even do justice to the sets that have made themselves so conspicuous by their follies, their love of luxury and notoriety, and their exclusiveness. They do not deserve all the opprobrium that has been heaped upon them. Many among them are, doubtless, very silly, nay, worse than silly, but their offensive exclusiveness is chiefly owing to the extraordinary mania now existing in England, which seems to urge all people to leave their own station and calling, and make a push for the sphere above them.

An overweening importance has thus been given to some of the least noble of our nobility, but in truth, lowliness of mind, habits and tastes of unspoiled simplicity, and plain good sense, may be said to



distinguish the domestic circles of the aristocracy of England ; and though the " highest style of man " belongs to no class or station, he may often be found among the nobles of the land.

It might, indeed, be said of the nobility of England, as it was of the Bereans : " Of honourable women and of men, not a few have believed ; " though the true nobility of all honourable persons consists, not in the earthly titles which they bear, but in this, that they receive the word with all readiness of mind, and search the Scriptures daily.

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Lady Bertha stood on the broad steps and smiled, and waved her handkerchief, and once before the carriage turned into the long dark avenue, the beautiful face, and the long fair throat of her darling sister Rosalind, were stretched from the carriage window ; in another moment, the carriage was out of sight, and her handkerchief was raised to stop her fast-flowing tears. The windows of the long conservatories which filled up the corridors on either side of the entrance porch, and extended the whole length of the house, were wide open, and Lady Bertha passed hastily into one of them, for she heard her own name repeated by many voices, and she was half ashamed to be seen with the tears streaming from her eyes.—" She was here but a minute since," said her youngest sister, Lady Lyla, turning to her father. " I am

sure she was here ; for after you led Rosalind to the carriage, when you had all turned away, Bertha and I stood watching them, and we were wondering whether Rosalind or Henry would give one last look from the windows, before the carriage turned into the avenue, and then Aunt Honoria called me : but here she is, father, turn round, dear father."

The duke turned, and smiled, as his lovely daughter appeared, coming forth from among the fragrant alleys of the conservatory ; all traces of tears banished from her countenance, and a little branch of orange flowers in her hand. " Papa came to scold you, Bertha," said Lady Lyla, playfully, " for leaving a houseful of guests, who are all waiting to know what to do with themselves." " All wishing to know," continued the duke, " in what sort of pleasant idleness they are to pass this holiday morning, and no one will propose a plan, till the mind of their fair hostess is made known. Very well, do as you please, sweet one !" he said, as Lady Bertha placed the little bouquet of orange flowers in one of the button-holes of his coat ; " deck me out like a bridegroom, if you like," and he parted the dark ringlets on her forehead, and kissed its white smooth surface ; " so that you do not wear the bridal orange flowers yourself for a while, my dear child, I am content ; for I could not have parted with two of my girls at once."

“ Dear father,” said Lady Lyla, who was very like Lady Bertha, but scarcely thirteen ; “ you have daughters enough, to spare a few of them, and I shall grow up to take my sister’s place in a way, though nobody will ever be such a treasure to you as Bertha ; but you must let her marry, Papa, some time or other ; for, though you may say to Charlotte, and to Helen, and to me, that there is time enough to think of marrying a hundred years hence, Rosalind is married to-day, and Bertha is two years older than Rosalind.”

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The Duke of Falconberg was not mistaken in thinking his daughter, Lady Bertha, a very sweet creature. She was far more—she was an immortal being, fully awake to the high dignity of her calling, not as the daughter of a nobleman of high rank, but as a child of God by adoption and grace. The grace and the blessing of God were shed upon her daily, even as the clear light and freshening dews of heaven upon a field which the Lord hath blessed ; not that she herself had been a passive or careless recipient of those holy influences. She believed that where the kingdom of God is really received into the heart, it comes like leaven, quietly and gradually, but thoroughly working, and leaving no part unchanged by its searching and converting powers ; thus, while she was simply dependent upon

her God for every thing, leaning upon Him with a perfect reliance, taking Him simply at His word, her faith was no indolent dependence, but the putting forth of an earnest application, the exertion of an active living principle. She neglected no means of grace, and the whole modest course of her diligent and consistent life seemed to say, "I will shew you my faith by my works."

For some hours before dinner, Lady Bertha was left alone. The ladies who were her guests, had all retired to their own apartments. Her cousin, Elizabeth Shirley, came to her just as she was finishing her toilet. "We want to know," said Miss Shirley, "that is, Bertha—my aunt Honoria and I want to know if we can come and converse with you quietly in your dressing-room, till the bell rings for dinner; for really we have seen nothing of you, though we have been together in this crowded house since our arrival. I am to go back for aunt Honoria, if you will have us, and I dare say by this time she is dressed, as well as ourselves."—"O come by all means, dear Lilly!" replied Lady Bertha, "and tell Lady Honoria that we will go to the room she loves best in the house;—to tell you the truth, I was just going to sit and read there till dinner, when you came in; and I am quite sure I'd rather talk to you than read." The room of which she spoke was the next to her own dressing-room: it had been a favourite sitting-room, in which the late Duchess had passed much

of her time, surrounded by her children. The room was left almost as when she had inhabited it. The only alteration which had been made was, that a fine full-length portrait of the Duchess, by Lawrence, had been hung there. Lady Honoria was aunt to the Duke, and acknowledged by every one to be an admirable person. She was religious, but according to an old-fashioned style, and much attached to her own notions, many of which were neither more nor less than mere prejudices. Perhaps it would have been a good distinction between the religion of herself and her grand-niece Lady Bertha, to say, that the latter was strictly religious, Lady Honoria herself religiously strict. In fact, she had taken up the set of notions and practices which had been handed down to her by her own mother and grandmother, both of them excellent and high-principled women; and she would have thought it a sort of crime to question the orthodoxy either of their notions or practices. She looked down upon every one of them as a heretic, who was not bound by the same sort of legal observances as herself, who did not read the Lessons or the Psalms, as a duty, every morning; or who presumed to hint whether more profitable books might not be read, than the somewhat dry collection of volumes which formed her own peculiar library. She had been far from pleased with Elizabeth Shirley, for preferring that new translation of *The Imitation of Jesus Christ*, by Thomas à Kempis, to

which Dr. Chalmers has written an admirable Introduction ; and she had positively refused to read the Bishop of Chester's volume on the Evidences, because Elizabeth had said that she had found it far more satisfactory to her mind than Addison's Evidences had been. — " Dean Stanhope's Thomas à Kempis would do for her," she said ; " and as for any book on the Evidences, she read Addison, because it had been her mother's and her grandmother's before her ; but, for her part, she did not understand what a gentlewoman had to do with doubting the truth of the Christian Religion, or reading any evidences on the subject. Such a thing had not been thought of when she was a young woman. Elizabeth did not dispute with her aunt, for, like her cousin, Lady Bertha, she held the elders of her family in high reverence, and thought there was more presumption than wisdom in setting herself up as a teacher to one whose age and whose experience were so much above her own ; but though she did not express her thoughts, she did not feel herself equally obliged to dismiss them from her own bosom. She had a friend, who encouraged her to a free discussion of such subjects, in her own mother ; and she loved to converse with Bertha, and to write to her, with all that delightful freedom enjoyed by young persons whose high and holy principles and pursuits are the same.

As Lady Bertha and her two companions sat conversing in the favourite room to which she had

invited them, one or two rather pointed remarks were made by Lady Honoria, and Bertha felt they were intended for herself. One of her aunt's faults was the habit she had of talking at any one who was very dear to her, but whose ways she might, in any respect, disapprove; while the charm of Lady Bertha's character was her openness and straightforward conduct on every occasion.

She at once replied to her aunt's hints and insinuations by asking her, in the humblest and sweetest way, but very plainly, what she really had to bring against her. "Tell me at once, dear aunt, for it is both my duty and my delight to do what pleases you; and I'm sure I don't wish to do what you may disapprove." She found that the charge against her was that of withdrawing too much from the world, and being unnecessarily scrupulous, and introducing religion too frequently into common conversation. "There is a time for every thing, my dear Bertha," said Lady Honoria. "And you have a station to fill in the world, and you are not called upon to shut yourself up like a nun, and to make your father's house literally an abbey again, as it was in the reign of Henry the Seventh. Falconberg Abbey should be what it used to be in the time of your mother and my mother. Besides, your father will not thank you if your younger sisters are taught by your advice and your example to mope and give up all kinds of innocent amusement." Lady Ber-

tha had been sitting, or rather leaning back very thoughtfully, in one of the old, high-backed arm-chairs, her countenance very grave, and her eyes fixed upon her mother's portrait; but now she rose up at once, and sitting down on the foot-stool which she had placed before her aunt, but which Lady Honoria (who allowed herself no such indulgences) had made no use of, she looked up very archly in the old lady's face, and said, with a charming playfulness, "And do you really believe all these stories about me? You are come to stay at the Abbey, I am happy to think, for a very long time; so you will have an opportunity of judging for yourself how much of our time is passed in moping and finding out devices to banish cheerfulness. Do I look very wretched, dear auntie? Have my eyes lost all their merriment? Are the two dimples quite gone, which you used to notice so often when I was a fat, chubby-cheeked child?"

"But did you not refuse to go to the county-ball?"—"Is this the heavy charge?" said Lady Bertha, and she laughed: "I did not go to that ball, but I did not refuse to obey my father's wishes, for he very kindly gave me my choice."—"But where, child, was the sin of dancing?"—"I hope there is no sin in dancing," replied Lady Bertha, "for I often play for my sisters to dance; and, perhaps, now you are come, you will take my place at the piano-forte, as you have often done



before, that I may dance too.” — “ But what in the world kept you from the county-ball, my dear Bertha ?” said the old lady, returning to the attack ; “ I assure you your absence was much remarked upon, and Lady Townly wrote me she did not know what excuse to make, for she had seen you only the week before in fine health and spirits.” — “ Well now, I will just tell you, dear aunt, the simple facts. One evening, when our little concert was over, we had all been playing as papa likes us to play — you know what our little concerts are, in which we all take our part. Papa was so kind as to think that little Lyla and I had played very well on our two harps ; and, kind as he always is, he was even kinder than usual. ‘ I’ll tell you a secret, Bertha,’ he said, and then he drew my cheek close to his lips, and whispered, ‘ I begin to think the county-ball somewhat of a nuisance — what do you think, Bertha ?’ I smiled ; but, before I said a word in reply, he continued — ‘ That ball, Bertha, is a terrible waste of time, to say no worse of it. Then what a distance one has to go, with the servants starving with cold on the outside ! Suppose we don’t go ? — would you dislike to stay at home ?’ ‘ I should like to do so of all things,’ I replied. ‘ Very well, then,’ he said, and he kissed my cheek : ‘ you and I, dear child, will stay at home.’ Rosalind, who was with Lord Chesterton’s family at the time, was there, and expected to meet us ; — and here, aunt

Honorina, is all the mystery cleared up. Was there ever any thing so simple as our reason for staying at home?—we did what we liked to do, nothing more.”—“And what will be done when the next county-ball takes place?” inquired Lady Honorina. — “Really, dear madam, I cannot tell.”—“Do you wish to go?”—“I cannot tell the truth, and say I do.”—“Do you, however, intend to disobey your father? and if he desires you to accompany him, shall you refuse to obey him?”—“I hope never to disobey him,” replied Lady Bertha.—“That is a jesuitical reply!” said her aunt.—“My dear aunt,” said Lady Bertha mildly, but with much quiet dignity and firmness, “I hope you will understand me. Plain speaking and plain dealing are what I admire, from my heart. I should be ashamed of giving what you call a jesuitical answer. This is a day of religious profession, and I am ready to agree that much that is called religious profession is mere profession and mere display. I have always suspected the character of that religion which begins its reform by peculiarities in the outward conduct, while the state of the heart within is not attended to. It is very easy to give up dissipated amusements—to be shocked at the somewhat heavy and very tedious merriment of a ball in the country; but it is very difficult to give up a bad habit, get rid of an evil temper, or of the love of finding fault with the

conduct of others, and setting up ourselves above others. I am sure I do not wish to do so, nor to cast the slightest reflection on the conduct of those who find enjoyment where I do not. The same freedom which I would allow to others I should like to claim for myself. I will be very frank with you. As to the dissipation, the extreme and sinful folly of what is called a season in town, I do not intend to enter into it again; but, believe me, till you brought forward the subject with such a grave importance, that I began to fear I had been guilty of some glaring impropriety, I had scarcely given the dull and distant county-ball a thought. I had certainly made no plan on the subject, and I suppose I should have gone as usual, had not my dear father taken it into his head to propose that we should remain at home. I have felt it simply a matter of taste. The truth, my dear aunt, is, that I came out of my sick chamber last autumn a more thoughtful person than I entered it. My life had been given over. In my illness, I saw much of Mr. Herbert—dear, good, Mr. Herbert!—who was then staying with us. I do not mean that I was without the kind attendance of the excellent clergyman of our own parish; but I have been used to dear Mr. Herbert since I was a little child. I know he is always ready to bear with my ignorance and stupidity, and to answer my questions. I had much conversation with him at a time when no one expected I should ever return

to the society of those alive in this world. My mortal life was spared to me for a time; but I could not return to the world the vain, unthinking creature that I had been. I endeavoured, by Mr. Herbert's advice, to possess and to form a taste for enjoyments of a higher nature and character than mere worldly amusements, which had been before a great source of enjoyment to me. I have found the benefit of following his advice."—Lady Honoria made no reply to her niece's remarks, but by a smile and a bow; then, looking at her watch, she asked Miss Shirley whether it was not time to go down to dinner? Lady Bertha replied to her aunt's question, by saying that they had quite time enough for a little more conversation; and then she said, "You like Mr. Herbert, aunt? I know, indeed, that he is one of your chief friends and favourites."—"He is one of my most valued friends, Bertha," she replied, somewhat pompously. "I do like Mr. Herbert. Every body likes Mr. Herbert, child. And did he tell you not to go to a ball?"

"Poor, dear Mr. Herbert never opened [his lips about a ball," said Lady Bertha; "nor does he ever raise a loud outcry against those who differ from him. He thinks, I know, that spiritual-minded persons often expect absurd and most unreasonable compliances from those whose least objectionable errors are, perhaps, their love of worldly amusements. He shewed me that the gos-

pel is not a mere code of severe restrictions, but a new principle, which makes obedience to the law, and conformity to the will of God, a delightful privilege. As to the lovers of worldly amusements, I rather think he objects as much to the spirit by which those amusements are too generally opposed, as to that spirit in which they are usually sought. He thinks there is a way of condemning whatever is not becoming the Christian life, which is not only a more affectionate and holier, but an infinitely wiser way."

Mr. Herbert was then at the abbey. He had come from his happy home at Hallowdine, in Shropshire, not only to be present at the wedding of Lady Rosalind de Vere and Lord Chesterton, but to perform the sacred ceremony for them. He was the old college friend and tutor of the duke, and distantly related to the late duchess; and he and his very youthful grand-daughter, Rose Herbert, were two of the most loved and welcome visitors at the abbey. They paid an annual visit there every autumn, and Lady Lyla hardly knew whether she was most pleased to see good Mr. Herbert, or her own friend and marrow, Rose. The term marrow being stolen by Rose from the cottagers in Shropshire, where the word is still used as a term of affectionate fellowship — a 'marrow' meaning, perhaps, a beloved companion, of like age and like taste with oneself.

The marriage of Lord and Lady Chesterton was

a state occasion at Falconberg Abbey. The grand old mansion had often been the scene of stately entertainments, and it was then crowded with guests, many of them persons of the highest ranks. The grand apartments were thrown open, and the magnificent services of plate all brought out, and the servants were in their state liveries; but the whole household was so well regulated, that although the house was filled with guests, there was no confusion — in the midst of abundance, there was no waste.

It was evident that He who had been bidden to the marriage-feast of Cana, had been prayed to grace that wedding with His spiritual presence; and while He was present in spirit, many who were His true disciples, were there in bodily presence also. Among the most devoted of those disciples were the venerable Mr. Herbert, and the young and lovely Lady Bertha.

That evening, at the appointed and usual hour, the Duke led the way to the chapel, for by family prayer, the God of all Christian families was acknowledged and adored, daily and duly, in that household. The highest and the lowest in the family met together every morning, and every evening, calling upon one Lord, as the Father of them all, one Saviour as the Advocate for all, one Spirit as the Sanctifier and Comforter of all. They met together as members of one and the same body, the Church of Christ, and were reminded that He

who is the Lord and Sovereign of all, was, when on earth, the servant of all.

"Shall I confess to you, dear Lady Elizabeth," said Lady Bertha, as, arm-in arm, they descended the staircase which led from the drawing-room to the chapel, "that there was a time—and, alas! that time is not far distant—when I looked upon this call to family worship as an unpleasant interruption to the evening's amusements. How grateful I ought to be! how happy I am, to be able to see, in this sacred meeting of the whole family, a glorious privilege, and to feel, as we go together to the place of worship, as one, of a train of needy supplicants going forward to the presence-chamber of their King—a King, who has promised to supply all our need according to His riches, not in this passing world, but in glory. Nay, we are, I trust, like a family of children assembling together to seek our Father's presence, and to receive His blessing before we retire to rest."

"Songs of praise," which are the glory of Christian worship, were not forgotten by those worshippers. Lady Bertha took her usual place at the organ, and the rich swelling tones of her voice were heard occasionally above all the other voices in Martin Luther's magnificent hymn,

"Great God! what do I see and hear?"

When Lady Bertha retired to her chamber that evening, her own maid was not in attendance as

usual. "How is this, dear Worthington?" she said, for the venerable housekeeper was waiting in her dressing-room.—"Where is Vincent? I hope she is not ill?"—"She is only ill as to temper, or what she calls spirits, my dear lady," replied Mrs. Worthington: "she would not make her appearance either at supper, or in the chapel. Indeed, I thought you would remark her absence there. She is gone to bed, complaining of her nerves, and of her head."—"But what is the cause to this woful effect, Worthington? What has put poor Vincent so sadly out of spirits, or out of temper?"—"Poor Vincent! you may call her, my lady, because all who forget themselves, as she does, are to be pitied; but really, the airs she gives herself are insufferable. She is always complaining about something or other that does not suit her; even at dinner she is so greedy, that she continually dictates to me about such or such dishes, which she used to have when in Lady Trafford's service. Then again, when any strange men happen to come to the house, she looks so soft, and simpers so sweetly, and speaks in such a gentle voice, and goes about every thing in such a mincing manner, that I am ashamed of her. She was in high spirits all this morning; but when Lord and Lady Jerningham arrived, and she saw Lady Jerningham's maid, Mrs. Prince, and heard that I had arranged that she was to sleep in a sofa bed which I had made up in Vincent's room, she flew out into her



tantarums at once, and declared that she neither could nor would submit to such liberties. I was really afraid, from her manner, when she flounced out of the room, tossing up her head, that she would go and insult Lady Jerningham's maid, but what was my astonishment at finding, when I came down into my room, that Mrs. Prince and herself were of the same mind, both determined to resist being put into a double-bedded room; and the cool demeanour of Mrs. Prince was quite on a par with Mrs. Vincent's tantarums. 'Madam,' she said, in a loud voice, looking me full in the face, but not rising, though I had not seen her before, and always expect to meet with that respect I shew to others—'Madam, or Mrs. Worthington, or Worryton, I should be very sorry to make any complaint to Lady Jerningham, but as this lady (meaning Vincent) tells me you mean to put me in a double-bedded room, to prevent disputes and explanations, and that sort of thing, I wish to observe, that I do not sleep in a double-bedded room.' In reply to Mrs. Prince, I merely smiled as good-humouredly as I could, and told her it was always our wish at the abbey to make every body as welcome and as happy as we could. Then calling Vincent aside, I told her I depended on her to shew more sense, and to put up with some little inconvenience for a few nights, since the house, immense as it is, was so very full of company; and I proposed to her, that she should give up her

room to Lady Jerningham's maid, and come and sleep in my room. She sneered in my face, and rushed away up stairs, and, would you believe it, my lady! locked herself up in her room. In vain did I send up Hester, the still-room maid, to her—nay, I went up myself; but nothing would bring the lady out, and the last words I could get her to speak to me were, that she was not at all well, suffering much in her nerves and head, and could not open the door, for she was going to bed.” “Poor Worthington!” said Lady Bertha, “you have indeed a troublesome office, in attempting to please these fine ladies, who are more difficult to be pleased than their mistresses. Why did you not send for me? Is it too late for me to speak to Vincent to-night?”—“Ah, well!” replied Worthington, “there is no occasion to trouble you, my lady, or any one else to-night. Every thing has been managed, with some contrivance; and now I do hope you will let me get you to bed as soon as possible, for I am sure you must be half worn out.”—“Not half so tired as yourself, I suspect, dear Worthington. Good night! good night! God bless and keep you! We will try and win over that silly creature Vincent to-morrow.”—“If I were to give my advice,” said Mrs. Worthington, returning, “I should say she needs a good dressing.” “You know that I cannot bear giving what you call a good dressing, dear Worthington. You know also—I am sure you do—Who has recom-

mended the way of meekness, and bidden us to forbear threatening. We have found it possible to be very firm, and yet gentle. We must not forget our book of instruction ;" and saying so, she opened her Bible, while Worthington quitted the room.

In the morning Mrs. Vincent made her appearance, with a very languid air, and was beginning to make some apology for not attending on her mistress the evening before, owing to the state of her nerves, and of her head, when the calm gravity of Lady Bertha's manner quite disconcerted her. " I heard of your extraordinary conduct last night," she said, " and I do not intend to let it pass unproved ; so pray, Vincent, do not think that you have carried your point."

Mrs. Vincent coloured and bridled, and was affected with a troublesome cough, and thrust out her chin, and drew in her chest, and spoke of her having been very unwell, and coughed again, as she was accustomed to do, not from illness, but from affectation. Lady Bertha well knew how often illness was pleaded by Vincent, as an excuse for temper, and she was always disposed to feel as much pity for one suffering from an uncontrolled temper, as for a sick person. Mrs. Vincent talked a great deal of nonsense, which there is no occasion to repeat, and concluded by saying, that, indeed, she should wish to leave her present situation, for it was very plain, she did not give satisfaction, &c. &c., and so she went on till she had worked her-

self up into being an offended person. Lady Bertha heard her out to the end of her indignant appeal, and then spoke to her so kindly and decidedly, that Mrs. Vincent left her presence, fully convinced that she was wrong, and, saying to herself, that there was no resisting such a lady as her own gentle lady. She went, indeed, at once, to Mrs. Worthington, and made a full apology, and then the two admiring servants remained together, talking about Lady Bertha, and all her kind and lovely ways, and agreeing, that she was one of the few persons who succeeded in convincing another of being wrong, and yet in winning over the offender.

The Duke had, from the very time of her mother's death, impressed upon his daughter the importance of considering very seriously her responsible situation, as the mistress of her father's household, and Lady Bertha had fully entered into his views, and followed his directions.

"Your dear mother, my Bertha," said he, "knew the habits, and attended the comforts of the very lowest servant in this large establishment. Much as she valued our excellent Worthington, and thoroughly as she could depend on her, she did not see through the eyes, or hear through the ears of her housekeeper, and in this she did justice to Worthington herself; for, she felt that, as Worthington's orders and regulations were at times necessarily strict, and even displeasing to the idle

or the unprincipled, such person would be glad of an excuse to slander and to provoke her, finding her orders and her example opposed to their own worthless wishes or practices.

“ I do not say to you, my dear child,” he added, “ that your duties are not difficult, but the difficulty of a duty is no excuse for the non-performance of it; and you will find through life, that wherever the difficulty attending a duty is met in a resolute and Christian spirit, the power will be given to overcome it. Alas! the Christian gentleman, who is too refined, or I should say, too much of a fine lady to attend to the conduct and the comfort of the lowest and vulgarest of her household servants, is making a sad mistake if she considers herself the follower of Him, who was at the same time the King and Lord of glory, and the menial attendant upon His own disciples; for He washed their feet and wiped them with the towel wherewith He was girded; He even sat down to eat with the lowest tax-gatherers and sinners, yet did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; whose every word, indeed, and His every action, was attended with a noble propriety and a modest dignity, well agreeing with His High and Royal character? Is it for our own vain self-gratification, my Bertha, or for our mere amusement, that we are born of higher earthly rank than many others; and in the possession of greater wealth? It is not that we may have more to waste; it is

not that we may do our part to invent fresh luxuries. If we are really the children of God, we shall let it be seen, that we live like the stewards of God, over what are, in fact, His possessions, though men call them ours. If we are not His children, we are, in fact, set in slippery places, and our high rank and noble station in this present evil world, become the very snares of hell to us. In any case we have a tremendous account to render of the talents committed to us, in order that we should restore the same with usury." I hope, therefore, my Bertha, that you will learn at the foot of the cross to be humble in heart; to know your real state and station as a follower of the despised and rejected of men.

"In one sense, our high rank in this world may be called the accident of our birth, though the rank and birth of every one is no accident, but the station in which we are placed by the Providence of God. Our highest rank, is that which we share with the poorest day-labourer of the land, who is made by adoption and grace the child of God. Our highest rank, is our membership in the church of Christ, and in that church, as within the walls of the house of God where we worship, the rich and the poor meet together, and the Lord is the Father of them all. In that church, a young and wise child is in station before an old and foolish king. Our rank, indeed, depends upon our relationship to Him who is our Head, the covenant

Head of the body, which body is the church of God, made up of the members of Christ. The Lord of Lords, as if to stain the pride of all human glory, came not as one of the noblemen of this world ; He was the son of a meek and lowly virgin espoused to a poor carpenter, and his parents' worldly rank was held in low esteem, for their child was born in a stable, and laid in a manger. There was no room in the inn of Bethlehem, but had the importance of Joseph and Mary been great in this world, some other house in Bethlehem would have opened its doors to the gentle mother of the Saviour of mankind. Before God, my Bertha, the beggar Lazarus, whose sores the dogs came and licked, as if in compassion, for no man had pity upon him, was highly esteemed, while He speaks of and shuns the royal Herod as a crafty fox. How absurd, indeed, would pride be in his disciples, when He tells them, that He resisteth the proud, and giveth grace unto the humble ; that He putteth the mighty from their seat, and exalteth the humble and meek."

In the household of the duke, not only the comfort, but the highest interest of every individual was considered : there was no rioting, no intemperance. There were no bad or doubtful examples set by the heads of the family which might embolden the inferiors to do wrong and plead their superiors as their precedent ; no practices which might mislead the unstable, and enable them to say, as an

excuse to the question of a troublesome conscience — “My master does it, why may not I?”

On the subject of her place and station in the world, Lady Bertha had often conversed with Mr. Herbert. He often called upon her to consider that her highest calling was not that rank which she inherited with the sinful nature of human parents, but that to which she was received by adoption and grace after her mortal birth, even by a new and spiritual birth, to be the child of God, and the inheritor of a heavenly kingdom.

“As to all these things,” he said, “which are now in our possession, we are, as regards our right and title to them, ‘as having nothing.’ Of each and of all their real Master will make this demand, this enquiry—‘What hast thou done unto me?’ We are, therefore, expected by Him to consider ourselves as useful and accountable beings; useful we are to be to those among whom we now have our abode; accountable we must be to Him before whom we shall shortly be called to appear.

“In the magnificent Temple of Jerusalem every part and portion had its place and its appointed use—nothing was useless—for each and for all a suitable place was appointed. From the golden altar to the most unnoticed block of hewn stone, from the beam of cedar to the most delicate cornice, each and all had their appointed uses; and each and all were set apart from profane uses; each and all were fitly framed together as an holy temple of the Lord.



“ Christian society, if it be really and truly Christian, is the Christian church ; and in that society, in that church, there is an appointed place and an appointed use for each and for all of its members. They do, indeed, severally and altogether represent the spiritual image of that glorious temple, of which I have spoken. I may say, of the church to which you belong, not only the comprehensive church of Christ, but of the church of England, it is a spiritual temple. ‘ Jesus Christ (if it be rightly built up) is the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. In whom we also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.’ Whether, therefore, you are in this temple as a plate of gold garnished with precious stones for beauty, or as a single thread of purple in the broidered veil, still you have your place and your use—there is an appointed place and use for each and for all.”

## CHAPTER II.

“ Servant of God ! well done !  
Rest from thy loved employ ! —  
The battle fought, the victory won,  
Enter thy Master’s joy ! ” —  
— The voice at midnight came ;  
He started up to hear —  
A mortal arrow pierced his frame —  
He fell — but felt no fear.”

MONTGOMERY.

“ I do not wonder,” said Lady Grace Shirley to her sister-in-law, Miss Shirley, “ that Elizabeth admires that family. I quite agree with her ; — the more I see of Mr. Nugent, the more highly I reverence his character. He seems to me just what the pastor of a Christian flock ought to be. Every part of his character, as a painter would say of a fine picture, is in such excellent keeping. Grave and quiet as he is, what kindness and gentleness there is in his manner of speaking of others. I know that he is very zealous and very active ; but there is admirable judgment tempered with his zeal. Some of his opinions from the pulpit are

certainly beyond me; but I begin to suspect that Elizabeth is right, when she says that the only reason we (and she includes herself) do not quite agree with him, is, that we do not compare his statements with those of the Bible—that we rather try them by our old preconceived notions.”—“I know nothing of his notions,” said Miss Shirley, “but the whole family are evidently well-bred and very pleasing persons—who are they?”—“I am sure I cannot tell you,” replied Lady Grace; “we have been in this neighbourhood scarcely two years, and till to-day they never even passed an evening with us. There are one or two old family-pictures in their usual sitting-room at the vicarage, so I suppose that would satisfy you and Aunt Honoria, for I know,” and Lady Grace smiled, “you are both somewhat fastidious on such points.”—“And I suppose you are not, my dear Grace? However, I must do you the justice to allow, that both Lady Honoria and myself might take a lesson from you on the score of pride. I assure you I have many a struggle with myself; for, proud as I am, I am quite conscious of the sinfulness, or, as you would say, the extreme and despicable folly of pride.”—“I think Mrs. Nugent and her daughters remarkably pleasing,” said Lady Grace; “their simplicity and ease is delightful, because it is entirely without pretension. I quite rejoice in finding such neighbours here, and I do hope we shall at last be better acquainted. Elizabeth is quite right

about them — dear Elizabeth ! — she is generally right.”

The Nugents were well described by Lady Grace ; they were, indeed, not only good, but pleasing. Every thing about them was consistent, and partook of the same unpretending pleasing character. The very dress of Mrs. Nugent and her daughters agreed with the character and manners of a Christian minister's family. There were no extraordinary contrivances resorted to, producing effects quite as extraordinary to any person of real taste, such as cutting and shaping old dyed satins, the remnants of a great-grandmother's wardrobe. There were no outrageous imitations of old pictures, transforming the gentle wearers into strange-looking, stage-struck heroines. No, nor was there a restless anxiety in the face of the mother and her daughters during divine service to catch and carry away as correct an idea as possible of the fashionable attire of the Shirleys and their visitors in the hall-pew, nor as correct an imitation as could be managed in their own dresses on the following Sunday ; but the thick white muslin, or the sober-coloured silk, or the dress of cheaper and commoner materials, was just made in the plainest, simplest manner, the waist neither long nor short, the sleeves neither small nor full, and the three rules observed, both in making and wearing the dress, were modesty, neatness, and the most delicate cleanliness. The consequence was, that, though no effect was intended to be pro-

duced, a person of elegant taste might have said, had he seen either the mother or the daughters (perhaps the style of countenance and of form would have helped him to the resemblance), "There is just the kind of unaffected, modest woman that Raphaele has so often painted as his Madonna."

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The minister pronounced his blessing. His clear calm voice, in the kindness and gentleness of its tones, agreed well with the words of that gracious blessing; and it was followed by that hushed quietness throughout the congregation, which shews that silent prayer is going up from the hearts of the worshippers, and that the word preached has been met by faith in those who heard it—the faith which cometh by hearing that holy word. There was no banging of pew-doors, no rush, as if from a prison-house, in those who were leaving the house of prayer, the gate of heaven; but the chief part of the congregation went away in such a spirit as Burnet describes, when speaking of the effect of a sermon on the hearers: he says, "That which makes them look lively, and, as it were, smile upon one another, may be pretty, but it only tickles the imagination, and pleases the ear; whereas, that which goes to the heart, and wounds it, makes the hearer rather look down, and turn his thoughts inward upon himself; for it is certain that a sermon, the conclusion whereof makes the

auditory look pleased, and sets them all a talking one with another, was either not right spoken, or not right heard : it has been fine, and has probably delighted the congregation, rather than edified it. But that sermon which makes every one go away silent and grave, and hastening to be alone, to meditate or pray over the matter of it in secret, has had its true effect."

The sermon which had been preached that morning was long remembered by those who had listened to it. The event which it marked to them roused many who had been careless and inattentive to endeavour to recal as much as possible of Mr. Nugent's manner, and of the instruction he had set before them. He had given notice of his intention to administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper on the following Sunday, and had earnestly entreated them to attend, saying, "It may please God to make it the last sacramental supper at which some can ever partake—nay, some of us, perhaps myself," he added, "though now in high health, may even be called before; therefore, let us stand prepared."

While walking home from church, Mr. Nugent had been suddenly attacked with so violent an illness, that he could scarcely reach the parsonage. He was quite incapable of attending again, on that day, to divine service. Medical aid was instantly procured; but he seemed to get so much worse, that when Lady Grace Shirley, who was one of

Mrs. Nugent's kindest friends, called to inquire after him, she determined to send off at once to D—— for a celebrated physician. He came, and his directions were attended to. The medicines he prescribed were taken ; perhaps they were the best human remedies which could have been resorted to : Mr. Nugent seemed to find some relief from them. He rallied for a time ; and his wife and children, who had been frightened by the suddenness of the attack, as well as deeply grieved by its alarming character, began to hope that he would be spared to them, at least a little longer. It was, however, into what proved, a short time after, the chamber of death, that a few of the parishioners of the good pastor were summoned on the Tuesday evening after his seizure. He confessed afterwards that he had been suffering great pain during the whole time that they stayed with him ; but they each thought that he looked calm and collected, and spoke with his usual voice. “ I have often spoken to you, Ellis,” he said to the first that entered, “ when you were lying upon what seemed to me and to yourself the bed of death ; but you are almost restored to health, and it has pleased God to cut down my strength and my health so entirely, that I feel I shall soon, I mean, as to this poor, afflicted body, be numbered with the dead. Instead, therefore, of my coming to find in you a dying man, you come yourself to hear a dying man's last words — a dying man, but still a shep-

herd, Ellis. You often thought, perhaps, that I troubled you, when I pressed upon you, with such deep anxiety, the gospel of life and love. When I have spoken to you of the departure of your soul from the body, to go to its great account, and to be judged according to the works done in the body, perhaps you may have said\*to yourself, ' Ah! it is very easy for him to stand up there, in full health, and to talk to me of death, when I am very near death, and he is well and strong, and feels no fear.' Perhaps you have thought thus within yourself; but now the case is very different. I am on the very brink of the grave—you are returning to the thoughtless world in fresh health and strength. I have sent for you to entreat you, once more, to be in earnest about the life of your soul, to ask the Lord to help you, by giving you His Holy Spirit, for the sake of His own Son, whose precious blood was shed for you. I do not suppose that I have any power to turn you, though I warn you from the bed on which I must soon yield up my spirit. Our Lord himself has told us, that if we hear not the Scriptures, neither should we be persuaded though one rose from the dead. If you hear not the word of God, which is wisdom itself, you will not surely give heed to the foolish voice of man. Remember, besides, that the great question is not between you and me, but between God and your own soul."

" We have seldom met," said he to another man,



who entered the room with a constrained look and manner. "You would not meet me in my church, or in any of the ordinances of our holy religion; but I thank you for coming to my death-bed; it is very kind of you;" and he put out his hand to take that of his visitor. "My dear friend," he continued, "though you would not own me, or any other minister, as your spiritual shepherd, I cannot, I never could forget that you are one of the sheep of my fold. Will you sit down by my bedside, and listen to me for a little while? You bear a fair moral character in the world, but you are without God in the world; and yet He is the Creator and Preserver of the world — nay, He is the Redeemer of His lost creatures who are in the world. A time will come, when it will be found, that whether you are numbered among those who are alive in the body, or dead in the body, you must give an account of the deeds done in the body. This world will be burnt up, but not one grain of dust which has been once quickened with human life, will perish with the perishing world. Where, then, will you find a spot for your feet to rest upon? can you at this moment create one clod of earth? Where will you find a beam of light to cheer your eyes? can you create light when the sun will be blotted out from the heavens? Where, indeed, will you find one breath of air to breathe, when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? It is written in God's own Book,

that not only the wicked shall be turned into hell, but all the people that forget God. Do not imagine, then, that you must commit all manner of wickedness to be condemned with the wicked : every man born into this world, who will not have the salvation and the Saviour offered to him by God ; who will not live in that state of salvation to which he is called from the first moment of his existence, is necessarily in a lost state. For him all the magnificent preparation that has been made, in heaven and on earth, for the salvation of the worm man, has been made in vain. He is an unconcerned spectator of that wonderful scheme of salvation, which was planned in the counsels of the Godhead, and which is executed by the adorable persons of that eternal Godhead ; — that scheme which the very angels of heaven desire to look into, and which, perhaps, causes every wretched spirit in hell to gnash his teeth with disappointed fury. Alas ! while the heavenly hosts are ready to fill the courts of heaven with songs of joy at your repentance, are you still too careless, or too wilful, to give the subject of which I speak any thing like serious consideration, in a child-like, teachable spirit — in a spirit of prayer. If you are without God in the world, you are also without hope. You are still under the curse of the old and broken covenant : you are among the ungodly. If you have no object in view beyond this world, your mouth is stopped as to any complaint at not finding yourself among

those hereafter, who had set their affections on things above, whose treasure was laid up in heaven, and whose hearts were there also. Ungodliness is your natural state,—to continue in ungodliness, is one of the foulest offences against the Majesty of Heaven. It is pride in man, setting itself up against the gentlest condescension of Heaven, against the pitying love of a Father, who has given His own Son to die for the ungodly ;—it is pride in man, counting the blood of God, God the Mediator of the new covenant of grace and love, accounting that blood an unholy thing. It is indeed a foul offence, for it is pride in man resisting the sweet and gentle influences of the Spirit of God, when visiting the heart ;—pride sullenly quenching the light of the Holy Spirit ;—pride that must receive such a sentence of condemnation as that which was spoken by the gentle and holy martyr, Stephen, ‘ Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost : as your fathers did, so do ye.’ My friend,” said the dying pastor, “ bear with me. Indeed, I speak from no harshness of spirit ; indeed, indeed, the love of Christ, and of your soul, constraineth me. Forgive me, if there should seem to you a sort of uncompromising severity in what I say. I merely repeat to you what I find in the Book from which I am commissioned to deliver my message. Still, the sternest sentence in the Bible is but the severity of warning love. The threatenings of God’s word, as

I once heard a minister of the Gospel\* declare, are but as a peal of distant thunder, which warns us in an awful voice, but yet in love, to seek a shelter before the storm comes down in its fury. Don't turn away from me this last, very last time. You have done so very often before, but it will almost break my heart if you do so now. Promise me—won't you promise to consider what I say? Do so, and may the Lord bless you.

Mr. Vincent had turned away, but not in anger. He had done so, to hide the tears which were fast filling his eyes. The dying messenger of God saw that his companion was affected, and his own eyes were raised, with a look of thankful love, towards Him who heareth prayer, and who seemed, at last, to have touched the heart of the ungodly man, to whom he had been speaking. He had often spoken to God, weeping as he did so, in behalf of that man who had been so long a determined enemy of the cross of Christ. And tears fell also from his up-raised eyes, as he prayed for him again, but they were the tears of joyful hope. Once more he turned to speak to his parishioners. "Do not go away, Mr. Vincent," he said, "thinking that I suppose there is in my words any power to change your heart, and to convert you to God. The Lord may have spoken through them; the Lord may be pleased to bless me in making me, weak and unworthy as I am, the honoured instrument of your salvation.

\* The Rev. W. Marsh.

But you see what a poor failing dying wretch I am in myself. Had I not at this time a happiness far above the world, I should be, of all men, most miserable, and I should not have a ray of joyful comfort to cheer my own expiring soul ; much less, to impart to you ; but though my flesh and my heart faileth, yet God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever ; ‘ yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil ; for thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.’ Hear my last words to you, and then take your last leave of me. The ungodly are under a strange mistake, if they suppose their sentence is not yet pronounced. It fell upon them when the first command of God to man was broken. They are not then as prisoners at the beginning of an assize, who have not yet been put upon their trial. They are like prisoners whom the jury have already pronounced guilty, and who are waiting till the last day of the assize, when the judge shall open his books, and sum up their many offences, and pronounce their condemnation, and order them to be led out to execution. The day of the last judgment of ungodly men is also the day of their perdition ; for our Lord himself has declared that he who believeth not is condemned already. When, therefore, God has so loved this lost world, that He hath sent His beloved Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. When He has declared that the repentant and be-

lieving sinner alone shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life ; how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ?”

“ Mr. Vincent, I must say a few more words to you before we part. I had written to you last week, when I was in health, this letter ;” and as Mr. Nugent said this, he took a letter from between the leaves of his Bible, which lay on the bed. “ I hoped to have said something to you on its contents this morning, but I am worn out. Read my letter, as the letter of a dying man. I shall be gone perhaps before you care to open it ; for I know the nature of my disorder. When the pain, the agony which I now suffer, leaves me, my time will be very short. The person I have ventured to plead for in that letter, has given you, I know, just cause of offence ; and this not once, but very often. You have tried him and forgiven him, I know, with such kindness as few others would have shewn. He has deceived you again, I hear, even more cruelly and grossly than he ever did before. May I speak for the wretched man, even after this new proof of his unworthiness ? You will tell me I do not understand the circumstances under which he now stands with regard to you. I allow it, but for His sake who has forgiven us a debt, the sum of which no man can reckon ; for His sake who paid the blood of His forgiving heart as our costly ransom ”—The dying pastor stopped, perhaps from fatigue—perhaps because he saw no look of sympathy in the

countenance of him to whom he spake ; and remembered, at the same time, that the look of unconcern on the face, might be the plain index of the heart within ; for he to whom he spoke confessed no Saviour. He held forth his hand in silence. Mr. Vincent could not refuse to take it, and so departed.

Another visiter was admitted ; it was Miss Elizabeth Shirley. " It is very kind of you to see me, dear sir," she said, " and it makes me very happy, for the others were with you last Sunday and the Sunday before, and I was not. If any one has cause to be grateful to you and to love your teaching, I'm sure I have. I know you would say, that you had no power to change my will, and make me love the word of God ; but who would have taken such pains with me ? who would have been at the same time so patient, or so anxious about my best interests, as you have been ? "

As she spoke thus, she tried, but tried in vain to restrain the emotion which she felt ; she spoke with a faltering voice, and every now and then she stopped, for she could not speak without weeping. At last, she dried her eyes, and raised her head and said, " I am quite ashamed of myself, for coming here to give way to the grief I feel, when I ought to have known how necessary it is not to do any thing to agitate you. I will go, my dear sir, for I see that you are exhausted by interviews, which have just taken place between you and some others of your flock."—" Do not go," he said, in a very

feeble voice, "unless you will kindly go into the next room, and return with my dear wife and children. A change has taken place within me during the last half hour, but not from the mere exhaustion of fatigue. I have been in agonies of pain once or twice, while Ellis and Mr. Vincent were with me; but all pain has left me now, and a deep dead sinking of my whole frame is coming on."

His wife, his two daughters, Mary and Lucy, and his only son, came into the room. Mrs. Nugent went at once to her husband, for his head had sunk back, and his eyes were closed. She raised his head very gently, and bathed his temples, and sat beside him supporting him in her arms. At first, when he unclosed his eyes, he stared about him as one slightly bewildered, but he was perfectly conscious the next moment, and he looked round upon his wife, saw in whose arms he was supported, and smiled. "My children," he said, and looked towards them, and they came forward and knelt down beside the bed; Miss Shirley now felt she was in the way at a time when the mournful family might wish to be alone; but he looked towards her and said, "Will you also kneel with your dying pastor's children, and receive his blessing?" She did not require another invitation. He exerted himself to speak a few words. "There is a house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. The anointed of God, the Redeemer of man, hath thrown wide open the golden gates. He hath prepared the place;—that glorious place is pre-



pared for the sinner—the sinner must be prepared for the place. The temple is prepared for the pillar—the pillar must also be prepared for the temple. As the Anointed of God has opened the heavenly portals, so the Anointer of God must prepare the person, or fit the pillar for the temple. Him that overcometh, will the Anointed make a pillar in the temple of the Lord, and he shall go no more out. Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, which also hath given us the earnest of His Spirit.”

For a few minutes he ceased speaking, and seemed, by his thoughtful countenance, to be in deep and earnest communion with his own heart. He then raised his head and smiled, and his eyes seemed to turn their mild gaze upon his wife and children. His son William was kneeling next him. He addressed him by name, and then placed his hands upon the head of his son—“Mary,” he then said, and William rose up, and his daughter Mary came forward and kneeled in his place—“Caroline,”—Mary rose up, and Caroline took her place. Again he looked up, his gaze rested upon the kneeling form of Miss Shirley. His sight was failing, and he mistook her for his daughter Emily, who had been sent for, but had not arrived. William was about to explain the mistake, but his mother lifted up her finger and made a sign to him not to speak; she was even pleased to think that it might soothe him to feel that his eldest daughter was also with him. “Come near, my child,” he

said, and Miss Shirley rose up and kneeled beside him. He placed his hands upon her head : then again turning to his wife, he said, " My wife, my children ! the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The pastor did not speak again, except by a few words, which became more and more inarticulate. His anxious wife endeavoured in vain to understand them. Emily Nugent arrived while her father was yet sensible, and when she kissed him, and spoke to him, and told him who she was, he smiled, and seemed to know her. In a few hours after, the wife, and the children were desolate.

The shock was very heavy, for it had come suddenly upon the poor widow. I must not ask, " why is it thus with me ?" she said. " He doeth all things well. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord. Submission and resignation to Thy will, O my God ! are not, I hope, the less acceptable to Thee, because they are wholly of faith, and derived from Thee. I have them not from myself, and if I can say, that there is love even in this overwhelming trial, it is that I speak simply from Thy word."

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" Yes, my dear children ! you shall leave me for a little while," said the widow, on the first evening after her loss. " I would be quite alone with him who is, I know, the Father of mercies,

and the God of all comfort ; I must now go and put myself under His teaching, and gain at the foot of the cross, that composure which I should seek in vain elsewhere. I must come away from the thoughts and the ways of even my kindest friends," she said, as she closed the door of her chamber. " I must discourse with those experienced children of God, whose trials, and whose faith and patience are recorded for our learning in this Blessed Volume, that we may go with them to the same high source of peace and comfort !"

She opened her Bible, and she read of Abraham's call to an act of agonizing obedience ; and, as she passed on to the account of the joyful deliverance given by the very Being who had appointed the trial, she said, " I ought, indeed, to rejoice in having such records as these before me. Here I may trace the footsteps of the pilgrim, not only through the strait gate, and along the narrow path, but onward to the green pastures and beside the still waters. She turned to the story of Naomi and Ruth, and she thought within herself, " Naomi was desolate indeed ; for, though Ruth was with her, she had no child of her own left—yet all my children are spared to me still. She turned to many records of those " who had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment, who were destitute, afflicted, tormented : " and, as she dwelt in quiet thought upon the trials of those saints of

God, she meekly said, " Lord, when I think of the sufferings of these thy glorified servants, what are mine?—mine are simply those of endurance, yet keep me near thee ; for, though my sorrow may seem little when compared with theirs, it has almost broken my heart." She knelt down with the Bible open before her, and prayed that her deep affliction might be a sanctified affliction to her. " O thou gracious and forgiving Father," (such was her prayer,) " I come boldly to the throne of grace in my Redeemer's name. Thou dost not afflict willingly. Enable me to glory in this tribulation. Thou God of my husband, hear my prayers, and comfort me. Give me my husband's faith. It would be possible to bear any thing with such views as his were, with such hope and faith brought into the heart ; but I trust such views are mine as well as his. Surely I also know by experience such hope and faith." Who has ever looked in vain to God for comfort ?

The living of Clearford was a very rich one, and had often been brought forward by the writers of certain journals as one of those overgrown excrescences which " disfigure and disgrace the bloated body of the English church," and the name of Mr. Nugent had appeared, with that of many others, as an instance of one of those pampered priests who were fattening on the property of the starving people. He was put down thus :—" The Rev. Thomas Nugent, B. D., Vicar of Clearford, Rector

of Upcott on the Hill, Perpetual Curate of Lullingcliff, Chaplain to the Earl of Travennan." His income, however, if rightly stated, would have been thus stated :—As Vicar of Clearford, 200*l.*; for, though the living of Clearford was of great value, about 1500*l.* of the income, that is, the great-tithes, went to the lay impropiator, Sir Robert Mulchester, who resided above a hundred miles from Clearford, and whose fortune had been half-ruined by the Turf. The Rectory of Upcott-on-the-Hill was about 80*l.* a-year, of which 60*l.* went to the curate; and the perpetual curacy of Lullingcliff, which was a small chapelry attached to Clearford, and so near that Mr. Nugent had been able to perform the duty there once on the Sunday; and it had brought him a stipend of about 30*l.* yearly. These sums added together, amounted to just 250*l.* a-year,—no more. The Earl of Travennan, to whom he had been chaplain, had been dead ten years, and was uncle to the present earl. The widow and her children, when every thing was settled, were left almost destitute. All the parishioners and friends of her late husband were very kind to her. Offers of assistance in many ways were tendered; but, on the arrival of her own father, who, although far advanced in years, made a long journey to come to her, a family council was held, and it was decided that Mrs. Nugent and her son William, a lad of thirteen, should return with her father to his little parsonage and

reside with him. Her daughters knew that with the limited income of their grandfather, it would be impossible for him to receive them into his family: they had other plans for themselves. They felt that they were called upon to seek their own living, and they determined to do so; but they well knew how great a trial it would be for them to part from their mother, and from their brother William, and from one another.

Emily Nugent had resided since her childhood with a very wealthy cousin of her father's, a Mrs. Carrington, with whose only daughter she had been educated. This Mrs. Carrington was supposed to be a very worthy common-place character, and Mr. Nugent had allowed Emily to remain with her, on the condition that she passed three months in every year with her own parents. Soon after Mr. Nugent's death several letters passed between Emily and Mrs. Carrington. These letters Emily shewed to her mother, but not till she had received and answered the last. To no one else, not even to her sisters, were the letters shewn; they only knew from their mother that Emily was not to return to the Carringtons, and that she had been treated with unkindness, even with cruelty.

A few weeks passed away, and the family at the vicarage were in a state of much perplexity, for no home had yet been found for the three sisters. Their grandfather had prolonged his stay beyond the proposed time of his return, and he now pressed them again to return with him to his own par-

sonage. The sisters were decided in declining his kind invitation. The distance also to Somerton was so great that they very reasonably reminded him how uselessly expensive it would be for them to undertake so long a journey only to leave him again immediately.

"We shall come to see you, my dear Sir," said Mary, "when we have earned the money to pay for our journey; in the meanwhile"—her sentence was not finished when Miss Elizabeth Shirley appeared—"I know that you are glad to learn that I have at last heard of something that may suit you, I mean one of you," she said. "My brother's wife, Mrs. Shirley, came to us, last night, and she is looking out for a governess—would you allow me to mention either of you to her." Emily Nugent was highly accomplished, and it was agreed at once that she should be proposed to Mrs. Shirley as a governess for her children. "You know of no other situation, I fear, Miss Shirley," said Mary, the eldest sister.—"I do not, indeed," she replied.—"Is it true," continued Mary, "that you have been inquiring about one of Mr. Vincent's nieces?"—"I have," said Miss Shirley, "the eldest sister is maid to my cousin, Lady Bertha de Vere; and, the morning I left the abbey, Vincent came to me and begged me to recommend her sister to Lady Chesterton. I promised to do more, not only to write to Lady Chesterton, but to call on Farmer Vincent and see his niece, who lives

with him.” — “ And is she going to Lady Chesterton ? ” — “ No, she is not, she is already engaged to live with some lady on the other side of the county, and sets off to-morrow.” — “ Would you recommend me to Lady Chesterton ? ” said Mary ; “ I am not sufficiently educated, or I may say accomplished, to become a governess, except to very little children, and I shall be very grateful if I am permitted to go to Lady Chesterton as her maid.” “ But surely you would not wish to become a servant,” said Miss Shirley. — “ Perhaps only a few weeks ago,” said Mary, “ I might have been too proud to propose this ; but I have been seriously considering what I ought to do, and I am sure that I ought to accept at once, and gladly, the first respectable situation which may be offered me. I would rather be a nursery-governess, or companion to some good old lady, or even the teacher of a village-school, but I have no immediate opportunity of being any of these. So if you please, Miss Shirley, recommend me to Lady Chesterton. You don’t know, dear mama,” she added, turning to her mother, who looked very grave, “ you don’t know how well suited I am to be a servant. You know I have been always a plain sturdy damsel ; and many persons have thought me without feeling, because I have managed to keep mine to myself. The worst trials that I can be called upon to bear, as attached to my calling, will be trials to my pride and my temper. If



I look to the right source for help, I shall be all the better for my trials, and none was ever the worse for being humbled." A glance at this moment passed between Mary and her sister Caroline. "I know what Caroline means," said Mary, looking upon her as she spoke with tender affection; "she wishes me, Miss Shirley, to ask if, when you write to Lady Chesterton, you will mention her also. Caroline works beautifully, and she, as well as myself, would willingly engage in any respectable employment; not that she is so fit to become a servant as I am — she would make a far better milliner."

Lady Chesterton agreed at once that Mary should come to her; and she wrote that her own milliner, Madame Olivier, a very respectable, and, as she described her, "a superior sort of person," had promised her to receive Caroline into her house. On the day of their mother's departure with William and their grandfather for Somerton, Mary and Caroline set off together in the stage-coach for London. Their sister Emily went at the same time to take the charge of her young pupils, then with their mother at the Shirleys.

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"I have promised Caroline to write to you, dearest mother" (said Mary in a letter to Mrs. Nugent, written when she had been about a week in town), "so you must take this as a joint letter,

though written by my fingers, from your two loving children. We arrived in London without any accident, and had the coach to ourselves almost the whole of the way. Poor Caroline wept all the first stage, and I felt inclined to do so, but I did not, except when I spoke to her to comfort and cheer her. I don't know how it was, but tears and words would come together, so I thought it better to be silent. Lady Chesterton sent her carriage to meet us, and she insisted on my keeping dearest Caroline with me a few days. Dear mama, it is not so disagreeable as I thought it would be to be a servant, or I suppose I ought to say, an upper servant, a lady's maid. Lady Chesterton has given me a charming little sitting-room, which she tells me I may keep all to myself; and she says I am to dine there instead of going to the housekeeper's-room. That is very kind, for though I would willingly sit with the lowest woman-servant in the house, I cannot say I should like to be with the men-servants, unless they were very respectable old men. I find every body kind to me, and very considerate. There is great propriety of manner about the housekeeper, whom I often see. I hope I shall never forget to attend to your advice, and keep up my own self-respect; for I am sure that while I respect myself, others will not be able to take a liberty with me. After all, dear mother, 'it is not the place that can make the person respectable, but the person that dignifies the place.' Tell

my dear grandfather I treasure up that saying of his. But now about Lady Chesterton — I forget myself — I ought to say my mistress, or my lady — she is so very kind to me ; she is quite beautiful ; I never saw such beauty or such grace as hers. I was really dazzled when I entered her dressing-room, and saw her for the first time. I cannot describe to you the real delicacy with which she treated us, I mean poor Caroline and me. She was so simple, so straightforward, so plain spoken, that I saw her delicacy was of the right and real kind, and I felt at my ease at once. I am at my ease, I feel at home, and yet I cannot understand how it is that I feel so. What a large and superb house this is ! my own room is larger and a great deal loftier than any of our sitting-rooms at the vicarage, and the new and polished furniture is far handsomer than ours ; yet I shall never love any as I have loved that room of ours, and the old painted chairs with their cane backs, and the curtains of faded blue stormont, and the old screen which my grandmother embroidered when she was a girl. I think, however, that my associations with the dear home where you now reside are almost as pleasant ; they must be so to you. How happy Caroline and I felt in reading over together your charming letter. We saw your arrival, and my grandmother and old Welsh Betty standing in the porch to welcome you, and Clement, that good old Clement ! holding the open gate while you passed

through. Then my grandmother, leading you up to the pleasant chamber over the dining-room, which you had occupied before your marriage. O yes ! I remember the bow-window, and the lovely view of the bridge and the church-tower, and the hill covered with the hazel-coppice beyond. I can imagine the delight of my dear grandfather and grandmother in having their only child with them, and in being permitted to spend the remainder of their days with her. Dear mamma, we ought to give you up more cheerfully than we do, knowing where you are and with whom. For our own comfort we must pray that, in the evening of your days, all your children may be permitted to be gathered round you. How kind of Mr. Alford to offer to assist my grandfather in teaching dear William ! he will get on fast I have no doubt ; and, when he is ready to go to college, I trust, with God's blessing, his sisters will be enabled to pay his expenses there."

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The establishment of Madame Olivier was conducted with great propriety, at least according to her ideas of propriety. There was not one among her large assemblage of young ladies whose appearance and manners were not, at least as far as a common observer might judge, gentle, and perfectly free from bold or immodest levity. Madame Olivier herself was young, and very attractive in

her personal appearance. She had two lovely little girls, twins, who were under the care of a very good-humoured Bonne. Of Monsieur Olivier mention was never made ; and it was supposed by every one, either that Madame was a widow, or that she had made an unhappy marriage, and was separated from her husband. Her father, Monsieur Achille Brocas, resided with her, and, assisted by a clerk, undertook the book-keeping and the management of all Madame Olivier's money matters. He was a very young-looking man, full of vivacity, polite and courteous towards every one in the house to an extraordinary degree, and consequently a favourite with every one. All the early part of the day he looked very old, and wretched, and wizened, and was dirty and slovenly in his dress ; but a most extraordinary change took place in his appearance towards the afternoon, which reminded Caroline of a toy which she had possessed when a child, a grinding-mill, at one end of which a number of persons were going in, old and feeble, who came out at the other end gay and blooming with renewed youth.

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Lady Chesterton belonged to a class seldom or ever depicted in books, but fearfully common in society ; the class capricious—she was a capricious lady. Nothing could be more delightful at times, at least, her admirers said so, than her smile, the

tones of her voice, her charming frankness, the really affectionate confidence which she encouraged, which she reposed in one : but this combination of all that was enchanting, was at other times looked for in vain. Her look, her voice, her manner, threw you gently back upon yourself, and bade you consider whether some mistake had not been made by you ; whether you had ever been on terms of intimacy with the cold, languid, forgetful lady, whose half-shut glance, and bow of distant recognition, and voice of most entire indifference, were the only signs of her acknowledgment. Perhaps it was this very quality, this seemingly unaccountable caprice, accompanied as it was in Lady Chesterton, by a peculiar style of beauty, and by all the advantages of high rank, that placed her at once among the leaders of the highest ton. Her high rank alone, would not have done this for her, for many of the highest rank are deemed inadmissible by the impertinent few ; nor would her beauty have been her passport, for, with relation to the exclusive party, it may be said of the most distinguished for personal loveliness,

“ Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.”

But her caprice, her calm and smiling indifference, her ease, and perfect self-possession, wherever she appeared, combined with the captivating sweetness of her manner, were perfectly irresistible.

Lady Chesterton was at once the object of uni-

versal admiration. Her extraordinary grace, her smile, the very tones of her voice, so rich and clear, and sweetly modulated, that some words seemed like a new language, from her pronunciation :— her style of dress so admirably adapted to her style of beauty ! caused her influence to be at once felt and acknowledged. The most flattering attentions were lavished upon her by those whose mere notice was distinction, the leaders of the most foolishly exclusive set in London. Lady Chesterton received their advances as a matter of course, and quietly took her place at once as a leader among them. Her sayings were repeated, her society was courted. No parties were thought so *recherché* pleasant as those at Chesterton House. The extravagant and the dissipated knew that they should find excitement there ; and with them there could be no amusement without excitement.

The saying that a man is no hero to his valet de chambre is too often a true saying : but had Mary Nugent heard it, she would have exclaimed — “ The saying may be true of men, but I am sure Lady Chesterton is a heroine, or something very like one, to her lady’s-maid. How feminine she is ! how delicately modest ! how truly refined ! What a sweet and winning courteousness in her manner, even when speaking to me ! ” A week or two passed, and Mary had found that her mistress was a person of most uncertain humours, that she could be unreasonable, impatient, captious,—and

that a sneer of cold disdain could appear on her beautiful chiselled lips, and that words of bitterness could proceed from them. Mary, however, was not astonished; she saw that Lady Chesterton had reason to be thoroughly dissatisfied with herself, and she did not wonder that a dissatisfied feeling with herself flowed over upon others. Day after day, or rather night after night, was consumed in one ceaseless round of folly and sinful irregularity. The conventional disorder which was the order of the whole house—the extravagantly late hours—the habits of the servants—the habits of their superiors—the extreme frivolity of the conversation, which she was occasionally obliged to hear, when her mistress's more intimate friends were admitted to her dressing-room;—all this did astonish her. “I was mistaken, dearest mother,” she said—she was writing a letter to her mother—“I was mistaken in saying, ‘you cannot tell how easy it is to be a servant!’ I begin to find it very difficult: I need your advice, for I am often tried, often tempted to yield to tempers, to which I did not know I was ever inclined to give way, while I was at home with you, and my dear father and my sweet sisters. I write to you in strict confidence. I know you will not mention to any one the subject of my letters to you. I did not believe in the excesses of folly and vanity which exist in very high worldly society, till I came here. My beautiful and charming mistress is already an altered being. I try in vain to



please her; yet not altogether in vain, for sometimes, for a day or two, she is very kind; then suddenly, without any apparent reason, she is angry and petulant if I do not guess her very thoughts; for she will remain for days, scarcely speaking, even to tell me what I am to do. I cannot wonder at this change, nor will you, if I tell you the utterly useless life we all lead. I feel ashamed at belonging to such a household. One pursuit is followed—pleasure; and yet no one seems really pleased. My dear lady never rises till noon-day, nay, often later; indeed, her strength would be quite exhausted if she did. She never goes out for the evening till after the hour we went to bed at the vicarage; and she comes home some hours after midnight, looking pale and jaded, or in a state of feverish excitement. When I look at her, decked out with such costly elegance, and going forth to the dissipation of the evening, perhaps to several parties on the same night, perhaps to the opera-house, or the balls at Almack's, she seems to me a victim decked out for some dreadful sacrifice. As for the servants, they are no longer what they were. To be sure, the excellent housekeeper is gone; and I now see how great the restraint of her presence was upon the other servants. Her successor is good-natured, but gives herself no trouble; and allows herself and all around her indulgences, which I cannot help thinking she has no right to. The parties which I find are given when my lord and

lady dine out, are really quite disgraceful. Sometimes the upper servants go out for the evening, and then the uproar that goes on below!— You ask me why I do not speak out to Lady Chesterton on the subject ; I have done so ; I did not hesitate long. She stared at me when I told her of the practice of the servants, and thanked me for my information, adding, that she should certainly attend to it ; but I have reason to suppose she had not cared to do so till about a week ago, when the upper housemaid was discharged, for nearly setting the house on fire. I was sitting up, as usual, after midnight, in my lady's dressing-room, when, on going to my own room for a book, I perceived a strong smell of something burning. I found that it proceeded from the chamber of the upper housemaid. I knocked at her door, received no answer, and then entered the room. She had fallen asleep, half-undressed, on the bed, with the candle, I suppose, in her hand, for it lay on the bed, flaring and melting, and making a stench almost intolerable ; the melting tallow had reeked over the bed-clothes, and they had been burnt through to the bedstead. I instantly shut the door of the room, to prevent the spread of the flames from the circulation of the air, and with great difficulty I at length succeeded in preventing the fire from spreading. Once or twice I feared my exertions were in vain, and was about to leave the room and call for assistance. However, the flames were got under,

I suffered much at the time from the stifling smoke, and the stench with which the room was filled.

“ On hastening down into the housekeeper's room, I found rather a riotous party there, with several bottles of wine on the table before them, and a large dish of rout cakes. The housekeeper was throwing herself back in her chair, with laughter, while a young man of strange appearance, with a glass of wine in his hand, was making her what, I think, is called a scrape and a bow, a very low bow. The under-butler, who is a young man, was standing with a bottle of wine in his hand, as if waiting to fill the glass, as soon as it might be emptied. At the sight of me they all looked astonished ; and loud and many were the exclamations, when I told them what had happened in the housemaid's room. ‘ Ah ! I knew it would be so — I warned her of it scores of times,’ cried out the strange looking youth that had been bowing to the housekeeper ; and from the sound of the voice, and the face now turned towards me, I saw — and saw with shame — the strange looking youth was, in fact, one of the under housemaids, a pretty looking girl, who had always seemed modest and feminine till then. The upper housemaid, it appeared, had been with a party of the other servants to the play, and on coming home, they had called on a friend, who knew and favoured the housemaid's propensity for drinking. The evening was piercingly cold, owing to a sharp east wind ; and she

had there taken glass after glass to keep out the cold. In crossing a street near Piccadilly, a carriage drove up so furiously, that the party were nearly run over ; they all shouted or screamed out, some with anger, and others with laughter ; when it was discovered that the carriage was my lord's — not that he was in it, but the coachman and footman were driving up to a public-house, for what they called some refreshment. It seems the coachman is an admirer of Kitty's, and he insisted on treating her and the other ladies : (our servants are all called ladies and gentlemen by one another,) with a glass of something comfortable. Poor Kitty took more than one glass.

“ The next evening I took care to be in the room when Mrs. Poole, the housekeeper, came up to my lady. I waited to hear whether she would speak of what had happened the night before ; but she had evidently made up her mind to say nothing about it, and was leaving the room, when I requested her to stay and inform her ladyship of the accident that had happened, and the cause of the accident. I also spoke of the scene that I had witnessed in the housekeeper's room, and I entreated Mrs. Poole not to allow her good-natured and indulgent disposition to get the better of her sense of what is right. Mrs. Poole is really kind-hearted, and I do not think she intends to act badly ; but I find a very low and lax sort of morality, on many points, among the servants here.

My lord was sent for, but I did not stay to hear what he or her ladyship said to the housekeeper. Would you believe it, my dear mother ! but scarcely a week has passed since the circumstances which I had related took place, yet the riot (for riot is the best name to describe it) has begun again below. The new servant, who is come to take the place of upper housemaid, appears to be an upright, excellent woman ; and I find her presence quite a comfort to me. She is the daughter, I find, of an old tenant of the Duke, my lady's father, and was recommended by Lady Bertha de Vere, Lady Cherterton's sister. Ann, the new housemaid, gives me such an account of the family at the Abbey, and of Lady Bertha, and of Mrs. Worthington, the housekeeper, that I find I must not form a judgment of all noblemen's households from this in which I am placed. I was going to tell you, however, that the riotous parties have begun again among the servants below. Ann will not be present at their parties, and passes most of her time in her own room. She tells me, that only last night a dance was given at the milkman's, the man who supplies this and many of the neighbouring families with milk. She met two of the scullery maids going down stairs in light silk gowns, and their hair dressed out in ringlets and artificial flowers."

Mary did not send this letter. On reading over what she had written, it struck her that, even to her mother, she had no right to give such gossiping de-

tails of the habits of the family in which she lived. She was a very just character, and always more ready to condemn herself than others ; and she had written on without much thought. But when she came to consider her letter, she felt shocked and ashamed of the complaints she had made, nay, written down, against the mere faults of temper in her young and noble mistress. “ After all,” she said to herself, “ what real kindness I have met with on most occasions ! and I dare say, she does not mean to be so unkind to me, in particular ; but she is not pleased with herself ; her conscience tells her, that the life she is just now living, is unprofitable, and unlike her former life with her sweet sisters at the Abbey ; and so, when she is not pleased with herself, she has not the heart to be pleased with any one, or any thing, unless attended with excitement. How kind she is about my sister Caroline ! she always invites her to pass the Sunday with me ; and she speaks so sweetly to her whenever she meets her ; and she never fails to ask why she is not here, if she does not find her with me. After all, am I not her servant ? ” Mary put her letter into the fire, and wrote a very different one. Not many days after the burning of this letter, Lady Chesterton gave way to a fit of the most undisguised ill-humour. She was provoked with Mary for what had been certainly a most stupid blunder about a note and a message to the Princess de Nivorno, a French lady, and the wife of some ambassador or minister from

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one of the Italian courts, and the favourite friend of Lady Chesterton. Madame di Nivorno had agreed to wait at home till a certain hour, to make arrangements about a concert which was to be given at Chesterton House ; and she had promised the Italian singer, by whom the concert in question was to be given, to let him know on what day Lady Chesterton would allow her house to be opened. Pasta and Malibran had both kept themselves disengaged for this day ;—but the expected note never reached its destination, and the mistake was not discovered until two days after, when both the favourite singers had made other engagements. Signor Tromboni, the concert giver, came to Lady Chesterton in tears, and brought with him a note from Madame de Nivorno, an appeal to her feelings, written in a style of high-flown sentiment, which had the effect of exciting the same high-flown sentiments in her friend. Her ladyship's own footmen were questioned and cross-questioned—the terms, “totally without excuse!”—“perfectly unpardonable!” &c. &c. were uttered in various keys. At last, the delinquent was discovered to be Mary: the blunder was plainly and clearly traced to her, and fixed upon her. Lady Chesterton did not sit in frigid silence, or look her anger, but, in a few cold and very cutting words, she insulted her very grossly. Mary had already expressed her sorrow, and laid all the blame upon herself. She now stood silent, looking so meek, and yet so quietly

dignified, that, for the first time in Mary's presence, Lady Chesterton felt conscious she was in the presence of a superior person. A few quiet tears rose into Mary's eyes, and trickled slowly down her cheeks ; and the kind-hearted Italian, struck perhaps as much by the simply noble appearance, as by the sweet manner of Mary, said something in her behalf.

Lady Chesterton turned from him, with a light and rather loud laugh, which proved, by its unnatural tone, that she was not quite at ease with herself. " You may go," she said coldly to Mary ; and Mary felt the permission as a prisoner feels an escape.

Lady Chesterton, spoiled as she already was by her intercourse with the vain and worldly, had not lost the sense of justice and the kind feelings which she had brought from her father's house. She sat for some considerable time after the Italian singer had left her, thinking over her repeated unkindness, and her last gross insult to the gentle and uncomplaining girl, to whom she had made so many professions of kindness on receiving her into her family ; and she was not long in deciding what she ought to do, and do immediately. She went to seek Mary. She did not find her in her own dressing-room, nor sitting at work in the little sitting-room adjoining, for Mary had been suddenly called down stairs to speak to one of Lady Chesterton's trades-persons. She remained in the room waiting for Mary's return. Mary Nugent's delicate



needle-work was lying on her little table. Lady Chesterton took it up to examine and admire it, as she always did. Under it was a small Bible; it lay open, and there were one or two round blistered spots yet damp upon its open pages. "Not this," said Lady Chesterton to herself, speaking of the first verse that met her eye; "nor this—no, nor this—but here is the part she has been reading—'Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.'"

The tears now fell fast from her own eyes, and added many more blistered spots to the open pages of the Bible.

Lady Chesterton replaced the needle-work, and went into her dressing-room. "I have hurt her feelings grossly," she said to herself, "and she does, indeed, in her desolate state, need the comfort of that Book. Ah! would that I read it daily, as once I did! How short a time has passed since, with my own lovely Bertha, that volume was my frequent study! Then, perhaps, I should not have ranked amongst the froward, but among the good and gentle."—In a few minutes, Mary returned to her work. Lady Chesterton called her to come into her dressing-room. She expected to see a clouded brow, and eyes red with weeping. She saw a countenance as calm and clear as it had ever been, with its usual sweet intelligent expression, and the voice she heard had all its

usual cheerfulness. "We shall not be interrupted here," said Lady Chesterton: "will you be so kind as to shut the door, and let me speak to you? I have been waiting to do so, to beg your pardon, my dear young friend: no, do not stop me—do not speak of not wishing me to be so humbled" (for Mary had begun to speak). "I did, indeed, humble—nay, that is too good a word—I degraded myself below the lowest creature in the street, when I insulted you so grossly. I promise you that I will strive, in future, to watch over my proud, unkind spirit, and my capricious temper. This is not the first time that I have been unkind and most unjust to you, though I have never insulted you before. I know what you would tell me, if you were to speak out; you would beg me to pray as well as watch, and so would my pious sister, Lady Bertha; but there is a passage in Scripture, which applies too well to my present state. I do not know where to find it; but you do, I have no doubt. It is this, or somewhat like it—'They that follow after lying vanities forsake their own mercies.'"

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It was not till near the end of June that Lady Bertha came to town. She had promised her father to go to the last drawing-room of the season; but she loved a country life, and she sighed, with

real regret, as she turned from the ancient groves of the abbey, in their full fresh beauty of foliage, and the gardens where the rose was just bursting into bloom, and thought of the din and glare of rattling carriages and crowded streets. The Duke had been in town once or twice during the season, but had passed as much of his time as he could command, among his neighbours and tenants in the country. It was a subject of astonishment to those who heard from a distance of the prosperity of that side of the county of \* \* \* \*, where the Duke resided; but the fact was easily accounted for. The Duke himself, and his family, and almost all the neighbouring gentlemen, who were large landed proprietors, and among whom the character and example of the Duke had great weight, resided on their estates, and endeavoured to fulfil the duties of their stations. They saw, with their own eyes, the distresses or the comforts of their tenants, from the largest farmer to the poorest day-labourer. They heard, with their own ears, their grievances or their wishes, and were always ready to do what was really and reasonably required. In some cases, rents were lowered; in others, returned; nor did they think it beneath them to attend to the administration of the poor laws, and to see that an institution, highly beneficial when kept to its intended use, was not made a sort of curse to their parishes by its abuse. The consequence was, the honest old English principle of the elder peasantry

lived and grew up healthily in their children; and it was still felt by many a disgrace to enter a workhouse, or to apply to the overseer for relief. The poor-houses were rather alms-houses for the aged or the infirm, than lounging-houses for the idle and the profligate. Lady Bertha also, and the ladies in the neighbourhood, were well aware of the effect of their influence with the wives and daughters in the ranks below them. They were welcomed and confided in as friends in the cottages of the poor; indeed, the time was not remembered, when the ladies of the abbey had not come among the poor women of the villages around, and to attend to the schools, and to relieve the sick and the aged. Lady Bertha's mother and her grandmother had done the same; and the tradition had been handed down, that her great-grandmother, and of course the ladies before her, had all done so. It was not only among the poorer classes that the gentle Lady Bertha was deservedly popular: she was the charm of every class of society; for though she never forgot her sphere as the first gentlewoman in the neighbourhood, it was very evident to those who knew any thing of a sphere, which is at once the loftiest and the most lowly, that she might be accounted in that also among the highest in rank: she would have been exalted there by Him who hath put down the mighty from their seat, for she was "humble and meek." Although, to the conster-

nation of Lady Honoria and Lady Townly, she had been absent from a distant county ball; and although some other circumstances had given rise to the report that Lady Bertha was become very strict in her religious notions, her strictness seemed to be exercised chiefly upon herself; her gentleness and kindness had increased towards others. She did not shun the society of the pure and the good; and with them her chief grace was her unaffected sweetness. The most timid, the most vulgar, were never constrained in her presence: they felt at once her kindness, and that there was none of that smooth and civil condescension about it, which makes some gentlewomen in the higher circles as disagreeable as excessive haughtiness.

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“ We have never been parted so long from one another, my darling Rosalind !” said Lady Bertha, as she threw her arms round her sister’s neck on their first meeting ; but let me look at you ;—are you still the fresh smiling creature you left us ? Yes, you can smile, but you are a little too thin, and —no, not pale. My dear Rosalind !” she exclaimed, with a look of surprise, and then suddenly checked herself, for her quickly-observant eyes had discovered that the soft and delicate bloom upon her sister’s face was not natural. Lady Chesterton blushed deeply, but she smiled

at the same time, and said with an air of perfect unconcern, "I suppose, my sweet recluse, you have scarcely heard that the old custom, supposed to be exploded, of wearing rouge, is coming up again. The truth is, however, that I am obliged to leave you this evening. I have been engaged to Madame di Nivorno for the last fortnight, and I looked so horribly pale, so pallid, that not wishing to appear as *la dame blanche*, I stole a few roses for my poor cheeks! but I am so very sorry to leave you! I do assure you I have made every effort to prevent doing so." — "Well, dear Rosalind," replied Lady Bertha, "I will submit with as good a grace as possible, for we are to stay a full week with you at this charming villa, and then we shall be a month in town, and see you constantly; and afterwards (you see I like to tell over my pleasures) we all return together to the abbey. But tell me, how long has this Madame di Nivorno been near you? Has she also a villa on Wimbleton-common?" — "Oh no, she is not near us — she is living just where she did when I came to town, in Piccadilly. I suppose nothing would induce you to go with me — it would be too much after your journey; but remember, I am a *chaperon* now, and I shall be delighted to take you and Helen under my protection. — So my father will not let Helen be presented till next year, and I suppose you agree with him. What a tall graceful creature she is! Charlotte and Lyla, she

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tells me, are delighted to remain in the country with Lady Honoria and Mademoiselle. — “ I thought,” said Lady Bertha, quietly, “ you did not quite approve that Madame di Nivorno last year, when you were staying with Lady Lucy Vernon.” — “ No, I do not think I did quite approve her, but I believe Lady Lucy prejudiced me against her. All I can say is, now I really know her, that she is charming — you can’t tell what naïveté there is about whatever she does and says ; you would suppose, were it not for her exquisite grace, that she had lived in a peasant’s cottage all her life ; — there is such a freshness in all her remarks !” — “ My father did not like her,” said Lady Bertha. — “ Oh, but he saw her to such disadvantage,” replied her sister ; “ I can’t think what possessed Delphine that evening.” — “ It was one Sunday that he met her when he had been invited to dine alone with Lord Chesterton and yourself.” — “ Oh yes ! I well remember,” she replied. “ The Prince de Nivorno was at Florence just then, and poor Delphine felt so desolate that she would come to me.” — “ Desolate,” repeated Lady Bertha, and smiled ; “ my father said she talked and laughed without ceasing till her carriage came to the door, and then that she carried you off with her to some *soirée musicale*. — “ All very true,” replied Lady Chesterton, “ and he might have told you that she had shocked him before she carried me off, by sitting down to the piano-forte and singing one or

two little French songs, which were certainly not quite in character with the day, or with dear papa's old English notions — but I wonder he was not fascinated by that voice; I never heard any voice like it — it is just like Milton's description —

‘ A linked sweetness long drawn out —

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Its melting voice through mazes running ;

Untwisting all the chains that tie

The hidden soul of harmony.’

I should like you to see her, Bertha — I can't help thinking you would like her excessively.” — “ I rather think,” said Lady Bertha, mildly, “ that we should not be much pleased with one another, and I am sorry that you are such a favourite with her. I suspect, dearest Rosalind, that she is not quite the best companion for you.” — “ Oh, as for her character,” said Lady Chesterton, blushing, “ it is irreproachable !” — “ There are many women,” replied Lady Bertha, “ whose character might be called by the world irreproachable, who are, notwithstanding, the most dangerous companions for a young and modest wife ; women whose notions of right and wrong are utterly confused, and who are guided more by the shifting feelings of the moment than by high and decided principles. However, I will not set myself up to judge — I only hope the Princess de Nivorno is not such a woman.”





The Duke now joined the two sisters, and, turning to Lady Chesterton, he said, smiling, "Is it true, my child, that you are going to play truant again to-night, and run away to that giddy little Frenchwoman?"—"Too true, indeed," she replied, with her usually unconcerned manner; "but I shall spend the evening with you before I go. I dressed early on purpose, and I do not go before eleven."—"Before eleven!" repeated Lady Bertha; "you mean that you must be in town by eleven."—"Indeed I do not," said Lady Chesterton; "it would be absurd to go sooner, unless one had a particular fancy for empty rooms, and I can't say I have."—"Well," said the duke, "you and I, Bertha, are old-fashioned persons; we have been accustomed to go to bed at eleven o'clock, and I have no great desire to change our quiet and rational ways. Why, my darling Rose, you will never bear to fall back into the habits of your old home. I can't help saying, Chesterton," he added, addressing himself to his son-in-law, "that I often enjoy my own ignorant blunders when I come up to town and find myself among one or two of the more conspicuous sets of our grand people. To me I must confess many of the new customs imported from abroad, are like new dishes from that fine gentleman, your French cook. I would as little care to learn the one, as taste the other. I really think that, every year I come to town I find some new absurdities in certain circles; but I

will tell you what I find, Chesterton, in the great body of the nobility — more manliness and more sobriety, and an increasing love for the charms of domestic life. I never join the domestic circle of one or two of our great statesmen without feeling a wish that some of those birds of ill-omen, who foretell the downfall of our English aristocracy, from their excess of luxury, could see the simple habits and manly tastes of those whom they slander. The young men in the upper classes are, in general, more intellectual, and far better educated than they were when I was a youth. My eldest boy, for instance, writes to me from Cambridge, that he would rather not take an honorary degree as I did ; and I suppose you (who are a young man compared with me,) did the same. Lorington intends to go up to the Senate-house Examinations with the other young men of his year."

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We may pass from the conversation that was carried on in the elegant saloon of Lady Chesterton, to a very different scene, — the arrival of Mrs. Vincent, Lady Bertha's maid, in the housekeeper's room. She was welcomed with great kindness, and with much smiling attention, and she dispensed her smiles, or rather simpers, on every side. She was scarcely seated, however, before she requested to be shown to her own apartment, to make some little



alteration in her dress. Perhaps this movement on her part might have proceeded from the appearance of Mr. Barnet, Lord Chesterton's valet, who was a remarkably fine-looking, well-dressed man, and whose gallant manners rendered him a great favourite with his female acquaintance. He immediately fell into an easy conversation with Mrs. Vincent, — easy, however, only on his part, for she fidgetted on her chair, and bridled, and complained that her face was all in a flush with the heat and the dust. “A little rose water, ma'am, might I beg a little rose water?” she said to Mrs. Leeds, the housekeeper: “there is nothing so good for the complexion, more particularly when the skin of one's face is so extremely thin as mine is.” “I find a little weak white wine and water a good remedy,” said Mr. Barnet, bowing and smiling, “and one I always recommend to the ladies.” Mrs. Vincent thanked him, and drew off her glove, and raised her small hand to her face, drawing the fingers which were decked out with one or two shining rings, down her cheek. She forgot that her glove had been pulled off before more than once, and that, what with the dust and the butter of the sandwiches, of which she had eaten plentifully, her fingers were not quite so white as they had been at the commencement of her journey. A glance at her hand, was followed by another exclamation against the heat and the dust, as she rose up and followed one of the under housemaids to her room.

The young woman who attended Mrs. Vincent was a very simple country girl, a distant relation of Mrs. Leeds, the housekeeper at the villa, and having not long left her father's cottage, in a secluded village in Hampshire, she was awe-struck by Mrs. Vincent's pretensions in dress and manner. "My bonnet box? where can it be! Pray run, my dear, and ask Lady Helen's maid, Mrs. Penley. I know she told me, she put it in the second carriage, which is gone on to town with the servants. I declare I don't think it was taken out." — "Is this it, ma'am?" said the girl, a few minutes after, "I saw the other lady take it out of the coach, and I carried it to her room." — "Thank the stars, it is," she exclaimed, with a very broad smile. A favourite cap was taken out of the box, and put on, as becomingly as possible, and the dirty little fingers were washed, and a farewell glance was taken at the glass, while her long gold ear-rings were pulled forward to view; and Mrs. Vincent, taking a clean pocket handkerchief from her reticule, and opening it, and holding it as modishly as she could, prepared to descend again; but first she stopped, "Young woman!" she said, turning round, and facing the girl who stood behind her waiting to follow her down stairs. "Yes, ma'am," replied the girl. "What is your name?" — "Letty, if you please, ma'am." — "Well, suppose I don't please?" she said, with a half frown and a half simper, for Letty was the abbreviation of her own name, and

an abbreviation by which she could not endure to be called.—“ Well, Letty or Hetty ! be so kind, my good girl, as to remember that I always take a cup of tea at six every morning, and you will bring it to my bedside at that hour.”—“ Yes, ma'am,” replied the girl. “ And I always *lay* till seven, when you may call me ; remember I always take a nap from six till seven, so be sure to come again and bring me my warm water.—But, wait ; let me see,” she added, returning to the room ; “ there, child, uncord that box, while I rummage for the key. Where can it possibly be ?” she dived into the pockets which she found it convenient to wear on a journey, and emptied her reticule upon the bed, and at last the key was found. “ Now open the box, and take out my dressing gown. Yes, it's at the top, and the slippers are under it ; there, hang it over that chair, and put the slippers under the chair, and when you have a minute or two to spare, you can come up and open these curl papers for me ;” and she tossed a quantity of twisted whity-brown curl-papers upon the table, part of the contents of her pockets.

“ Dear ! what a sweet pretty room !” she said, as she and her young attendant descended the stairs together, “ may I take a peep, for there is nobody in it ? and whose room is this ?”—“ It is my room,” said a gentle voice ;—and from a door in the side of the room, which Mrs. Vincent had not perceived before, Mary Nugent appeared.—

"it is my room, and I shall be glad to see you in it, whenever you will give me the pleasure of your company." She held out her hand as she spoke, and added, "I should have come to seek you before, Mrs. Vincent, but I have been very busy in my lady's dressing-room, which is the next room to this. Have you been to Clearford since I came away? or have you heard lately from your uncle Vincent, at the Warren?"—"Well, Miss Nugent, who would have thought to see you in a situation," said Mrs. Vincent; "and how do you feel yourself? and bear up against the shocks of fate? Ah! there's no telling, as I say"—"There is no telling, or rather describing," said Mary, with a smile of peculiar sweetness, how much happiness may be found, wherever the blessing of our gracious Father is sought as the chief good. I am very well, and I am happy, and have much to be grateful for; but pray sit down, and tell me some news of your sister and your poor father; is he in better health? Is your uncle kind to him? does he go to see him, or have him to stay at the Warren?"—"O no, Miss Nugent, my uncle never notices him now, they don't even speak if they meet. Uncle Sam says he could forgive all but poor father's last imposition; and that, though he will always have a home for my sister Catherine and me, he has done with him."—"I am very sorry," said Mary, "I know it was my father's last wish to reconcile your uncle to his poor brother. We found the copy of a long letter

addressed to your uncle, after my father's death ; and I have heard that he put the letter itself into his hands, when he sent for him just before he died."—" Oh yes, Miss Nugent ; and uncle made up with poor father after that, and spoke quite handsome about Mr. Nugent's letter ; but, as he says, this last is a more ugly job than any ; and if he forgives he cannot forget."—" That is but a half forgiveness," said Mary. — The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Penley, Lady Helen's maid, who came to request that Mrs. Vincent would come down to supper. Mrs. Penley was modest and quiet, and plainly dressed ; and Mary could not help comparing her appearance with that of the flaunting Mrs. Vincent. Mrs. Vincent, indeed, was more dressed than when at the abbey. She had already discovered, during her short visit to the housekeeper's room, that she was come into an element better suited to her nature than that of the Duke's household ; and as she tripped down stairs, she sighed at the thought that the one little week of their stay at the villa would soon be over, and that there was no Mr. Barnet in Grosvenor Square, no ladies'-man, as he seemed to be, so noble-looking, and yet so insinuating. She felt, however, an agreeable flutter, as she drew near the room, partly from the sound of Mr. Barnet's lively voice, and partly at the sight of a large dish of lobsters which she met, with the bearer of it, in the passage, and which she saw was on its way to

the supper-table, at which she hoped to be soon seated. She turned with a pensive smile to Mrs. Penley, "Do you love a lobster, Penley? Ah dear! whether it is that they won't keep to come to such a distance, or that Mrs. Worthington don't like them, I can't tell, but one seldom sees a dish of lobsters at the abbey—at the second table, I mean. They are prodigiously fine, Penley! ar'n't they?" she added in a tone that smacked of her love of good eating, her eye resting as she spoke on the dish of lobsters, which still went onward before her. Then suddenly relapsing into her pensive mood, she dropped back a step or two, took the arm of the not very willing Mrs. Penley, and entered the room with downcast eyes and mincing steps, and a helpless air, while her companion, who knew her ways, felt heartily ashamed of her affectation. Mr. Barnett was dressing a salad, and as they entered, he said, gallantly, "Well, ladies! you shall decide; is it to be a lobster salad? or will you take your lobster separate from your salad?" Mr. Hart, the head butler, was reckoned a very fine gentleman, and a very fine scholar. He was high and distant in his manners, and seldom condescended to be talkative. He rose up, however, at the entrance of Mrs. Vincent and Mrs. Penley, and laid down a fashionable novel which he had been reading. "Ladies," he said, with a lofty gallantry, "I have a glass of Champagne for you, unless, like Lord Byron, you like brandy with your



lobsters.”—“O shocking, shocking, Mr. Hart, I don’t know the taste of brandy, or any such odious drams,” said Mrs. Vincent, simpering.—“Then, my dear,” exclaimed Mrs. Leeds, “I can’t say much for your taste. For my part, give me a good comfortable tumbler of warm brandy-and-water, and you are welcome to all the Champagne—nasty cholicky stuff it is!” “I suppose, Ma’am,” said Mr. Hart, with a sarcastic smile, “you like your good comfortable tumbler, not too strong of the water.”—“Oh, you vile man, hold your tongue!” she cried out; and then turning to the two ladies’ maids, “There’s a virtue in brandy and water, my dears: I know it by experience. I never feel *myself*, if I don’t take my reasonable glass of weak brandy and water of a night, before I go to bed. It keeps me charming well, if I except now and then those little ailments that one feels now one’s not so young as one has been.” While Mrs. Vincent congratulated herself on the different tone of the society in which she was now placed, Mrs. Penley looked forward anxiously to the departure of her mistress and Lady Bertha. The licence of speech and manner in the housekeeper’s room was very new to her, but its novelty not only displeased but alarmed her; more particularly as she found herself the object of avowed admiration to Monsieur Rissole, the man-cook. M. Rissole was a well-dressed, good-looking man, with a peculiar and rather fierce expression of countenance;

and a stranger might have taken him for a bandit in disguise. He was indeed an *artiste* of the first celebrity; and, from the grave and important preface with which Lord Chesterton announced to his lovely bride, about a week before his marriage, that Rissole had consented to come to them, and was positively engaged, the young countess supposed that he was about to announce some astounding event. She turned away, with a smile of careless indifference; but she was not, like her sister Lady Bertha, a person of very strong mind, though her self-possessed manner, and her capricious temper imposed upon careless observers, and led them to give her credit for being so. Lady Chesterton and her lord, though neither of them persons of superior minds, differed in this respect; she treated subjects of high importance as trifles, and he gave to the most trifling subjects an extraordinary importance. Lady Bertha had been scarcely aware of the tendency of her sister's character to this sin; for she had seen her with partial eyes. There are also in our hearts the seeds of many deadly plants, which do not grow up till we are placed in the situation favourable to their appearance. She saw it now with heartfelt grief, and she saw also, that on some points, the faults of the husband's character were becoming those of the wife. "Is it possible, my Rosalind," she said, "that you can be so seriously annoyed by the absurd conduct of one of your own servants, and not assert your own autho-

rity, and put an end to the annoyance at once?"

"And what is it you would have me do, Bertha?"

"The simplest thing in the world: I would have you say, 'Monsieur Rissole, you cannot go to town to-morrow: we shall have full employment for you.'"—"And then the answer will be," said Lady Chesterton, "that his master agreed with him about the opera ticket when he engaged him, and that he has more than once been prevented using his ticket by our parties at Wimbledon; and that, to have an opera ticket, without being allowed to benefit by it, is beyond his endurance. I don't know what I am to do! I promised Henry that I would speak to Rissole myself in his absence; for, to tell you the truth, he never trusts any one to consult with his cook but himself. He will return with his sister and her fastidious husband to-morrow, and find either a dinner wretchedly dressed, or that M. Rissole has given us warning; and he will think, very naturally, that I am to blame,"—"But Chesterton is not without sense or reason," said Lady Bertha, smiling; "and his happiness does not depend on the humours of a man-cook."—"Ah! it is very well to smile," said Lady Chesterton, "and in theory it is easy enough to say what ought to be done, and what may be done; but be placed in an unpleasant dilemma, as I am, and be called upon to act, and you would find the difficulty of my situation." "My dear Rosalind," said Lady Bertha, "how little do you know of the real difficulties of

life, to talk in this manner ! Suppose, for a moment, that some really serious and very distressing event were to be announced to you as having taken place in your family, how quickly would this trouble of yours appear to you at once in its true character !” Lady Chesterton gave little heed to her sister’s words, but turned away to the library, where M. Rissole had been summoned to wait upon her. It is scarcely worth enquiring how M. Rissole was won over to give up the use of his opera ticket, and to send up a dinner which Lord Chesterton afterwards assured him, was ‘beyond the praise of words ;’ but I believe he condescended to take a ticket for the following Thursday, which being a benefit-night, was paid for by Lady Chesterton.

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A few days before the return of Lady Chesterton to town, she received a letter from Madame Olivier, written with much kind feeling, but begging to be informed what was to be done about ‘the Mademoiselle Caroline Nugent,’ whom Lady Chesterton had placed under her care. Miss Caroline had been lately subject to faintings, in short, she was ill, Madame Olivier feared, of a pulmonary disease. Poor Mary heard the alarming news in pale and silent consternation. What was to be done?—‘there was nothing,’ Lady Chesterton kindly said, ‘that she was not willing to do.’ Lady Bertha,

however, decided on what was to be done at once : her carriage was at the door, for she was to leave Wimbledon that morning. She left Mrs. Vincent with her sister, and took Mary with her to town. She drove at once to Madame Olivier's. Caroline was fearfully altered, and, for a long time, she could only weep, with her thin weak arms round her sister's neck, and her head on her sister's bosom. " They are all very kind to me," she said at length, " but I should not like to die among them. They do not understand me ; and their ways, my Mary, are so different from the ways of my father's house. There are many English girls in the house, but they laugh at me, because they think me singular and foolish. I am sure I never wish to attract any one's notice by my singularities. Could I do otherwise than what I did ? It was two Sundays ago, just after you went out of town. The rain poured in torrents, and I was just then beginning to be unwell, so I thought it prudent not to go to church. Every one, indeed, remained at home that morning. I took my Bible and went up into the room where I slept, to read : I had not then, as I now have, a room to myself, and several of the younger girls were talking about love-letters, and shewing the valentines they had received this year. One came and wished to make a confidant of me, though I received her communications as coldly and as kindly as I could, and she offered to shew me a letter which she had re-

fused to let any of her companions see. She was holding out the letter to me, when one of the others darted forward and snatched the letter out of her hand. A romping scuffle ensued, and I escaped to the large sitting-room, where the rest of the family were assembled. I knew nothing of the way of spending the Sunday here before that morning, for I had always passed the day with you at Chesterton-house. I was surprised to see most of the French girls netting purses or embroidering, while Madame Olivier had just finished making up a cap for herself, and she was putting some flowers into it; and, when I entered, she smiled and beckoned me to her, and made me kneel down before her while she arranged and re-arranged the flowers in her cap. I was kneeling there when I heard the sound of music in the room, and, when I rose up, and turned my head, I saw that Monsieur Achille, as we always call him, had opened the piano-forte, and was seated before it, while a party of the young ladies were standing up to dance. I was immediately invited to make one in a set, and I had more difficulty than you might suppose in getting rid of the gentle and playful solicitations with which I was beset. "Oh, you do not know how to dance?" said Madame herself; "I shall be your partner, and I shall make you love the dance as a Frenchwoman;" but indeed, dear Mary, I had not pleaded any such excuse as my not knowing how to dance: I told the plain truth as mildly as I

could, and said that, according to my notions, it was wrong to spend the Lord's Day as they were spending it. However, I need not take up the time by telling you that some of my companions were very angry, and Madame Olivier, as she always is, very kind, and that she took me with her to the pleasant room where her lovely children and their good-natured Bonne pass their time, and left me with them. — I am afraid, dear Mary, that I am seriously ill. I have tried to shake off any fancies on the subject as long as I could; and I would not write to you, or to my dear mother, for I kept hoping I should soon be better, and now what am I to do? I cannot work without a pain in my chest, which almost takes away my breath, and I have often fainted away lately after sitting a few hours at our work-table; yet I cannot stay here without working." — The perplexity of the two sisters was soon removed by the appearance of Lady Bertha: she had driven home, and returned immediately, and she came to tell poor Caroline that she must accompany her sister Mary to Grosvenor-square.

"What real kindness we have met with, dearest mother," wrote Mary, to Mrs. Nugent. "Do not be alarmed, when I tell you, that our darling Caroline has been very ill; has been, I am happy to say, for she is already better, greatly owing to the care and kindness of Lady Chesterton's sister, Lady Bertha de Vere, of whom I have before spoken to

you. We are both with her at present, for Mrs. Vincent, her maid, has taken my place for the present with Lady Chesterton, and Lady Bertha insists on my remaining to nurse my sister. You will not wonder at Caroline's illness, when I tell you that she has been obliged to sit at work all day, and day after day, Sundays excepted, from \* three o'clock every morning, till half-past eleven at night, and this has been the case during the whole of the present season. Lady Bertha was with her sister when a note was brought from Madame Olivier to inform us of Caroline's illness. She brought me to town in her carriage, and, as we came along, she made me tell her about you and Emily, and my poor father, and Clearford. She took me to Caroline, and left me with her while she went home, I suppose to ask the Duke, her father, whether she might take the charge of poor Caroline, for in less than an hour, she carried us both to Grosvenor Square, where she resides. The first medical men were sent for, and Caroline, with God's blessing, is likely to recover her health. Only she must not return to Madame Olivier's, and she is ordered to go into the country as soon as she is a little stronger."

Mary wrote again in a fortnight to her mother, telling her, in answer to a letter she had received from Mrs. Nugent, that she hoped to set off with Caroline the next day for Somerton Rectory, and

\* A fact.



she added. "I can scarcely tell you how it has been arranged, I only know that I have been very happy and willing to consent to the arrangement, but on my return to town, I am to take Mrs. Vincent's place with Lady Bertha. Vincent, however, does not remain with Lady Chesterton. She has had a violent quarrel with Lord Chesterton's man-cook, and she will not stay in the same house with him, and she has already engaged herself to Lady Townly. Lady Chesterton told her sister that she was willing to part with me, as she intends going abroad in the autumn, and wished for a French maid. Lady Bertha says, that she was to see one this morning."

## CHAPTER III.

On the day that Mary Nugent and her sister went to Somerton, Mrs. Vincent set out on a visit to her uncle at Clearford, the parish where Mr. Nugent had been vicar. The country residence of her new mistress, Lady Townly, was in an adjoining county, and thither, after spending a week or ten days with her relations, she was to proceed. On arriving at the farm, she found a letter directed to herself, informing her that her father was very ill, and in a destitute state, and that he anxiously desired to see herself and her sister. No hopes of his recovery were entertained, and she was entreated, by his desire, if she wished to see him alive, to make no delay, but come to him immediately.

The town of M——, where Mrs. Vincent's father resided, was not more than twenty miles distant from her uncle's farm. She waited a day, hoping

that her sister, who had been written to, and invited to meet her at the farm, might arrive ; but, instead of her sister, came a letter, to say, that Kitty was going immediately with her mistress to Ireland, and could not possibly come ; she sent, however, all the money she could spare for her father. Mrs. Vincent set out for M—— alone. After walking through several streets on the outskirts of M——, Mrs. Vincent, or Miss Vincent, as she was pleased to be called, when she was not in a situation, passed quickly through the archway which opened into Whitehead's Gardens. Whitehead's Gardens was a court-yard, containing some six or seven small tenements, which had been built by Miss Vincent's father, soon after his marriage with his first wife, a Mrs. Whitehead, the widow of a builder. She had brought him some property, part of which he expended on these houses, and called them, by way of compliment, after his wife, Whitehead's Gardens. The houses had been built on a bed of clay, and with cheap and unseasoned materials, and many of them were, already, in a ruinous state. One alone of them now belonged to poor Vincent himself ; the others had been long disposed of ; and to this one he had come, about two years before, broken down in health and spirits, after he had given up the sign of the Merry Drummer, or, rather the public-house bearing that sign. His second wife, the mother of his children, had been respectably brought up, and was, when

he married her, lady's maid in Sir Charles Harmer's family. She was, at one time, strongly attached to her husband; but his worthless habits had, at length, quite estranged her. Mrs. Vincent was a woman of a very proud and stubborn disposition; and having, after a violent quarrel with her husband, declared that she would never speak to him again, she kept her cruel resolution. During her last illness, he was also confined to his bed in the room above her by a severe attack of the gout. He was unable to get to her apartment; but he sent her a very humble message, entreating her to allow him to be carried to her bed-side, and begging, if even that could not be allowed, that she would send him, by one of her children, a few kind words before she died. Her only reply was, that he knew what she had last said to him, and that she never broke her word. The next day, the power of speech was gone; but, in her dying moments, she moved her lips, and by the most violent effort she was capable of, endeavoured to make herself understood, looking towards the door, and pointing upwards. The daughter who was with her went instantly for some of their neighbours, to ask their assistance, and the poor wretched husband, keeping in all expression of the pain he suffered at the rough handling of his gouty limbs, as he was carried down stairs, was brought to the bed-side; before he could even speak to her, his wife expired. As Miss Vincent passed along to

the wretched hovel where her father lay, she could not help hearing the remarks of some of the neighbours in Whitehead's Gardens : she knew several of them, particularly one fat old woman, who stood gossiping at her own door, with her arms doubled up before her under her apron. "Why, dear me, Sally!" she said to her companion, "here's Letty Vincent come at last! Grand and fine enough, isn't she, with her ribbons and her furbelows? Poor old gentleman! she'll never stay with him in that old crazy place; and if she leaves him, it will break his heart. Ah, well! she doubts whether he can be in that old hovel: and she's coming this way, and wants to speak to me. Your service, ma'am. Why, sure it's not Letty?" she added, with a stare of surprise, as if she had then only for the first time recognised her. "Well, dear!" she continued, in a tone of familiarity not over pleasing to Miss Vincent,—“Well, dear! your poor father is mortal bad, and how he has longed and pined for you! Yes, that is his house, sure enough. He has no better, and wont be wanting that long. A sad change, an't it, from old times, when he was such a fine portly man, and rode his own horse, and kept the Merry Drummer? Oh, yes! I will go up with you, by all means. I was with him not an hour ago, and then he seemed dropping to sleep; but I fear he is very bad now, for he was shouting and swearing out, just as you came down the court.” Almost as she said this, the shouting

and swearing were heard again. The daughter felt shocked, and said something of being afraid to go up. — “Dear me, child,” said the old woman, “he’s quiet enough, except for the matter of his tongue. You know he had always a rare loud and ready tongue, and in that he’s not altered.” Miss Vincent followed old Becky Dobbs to her father’s chamber. He was lying very quiet, and an aged, weakly-looking woman, who had been sent for from the workhouse to nurse him, was splitting and breaking up an old shattered chair, part of which she had already placed on the empty grate. “If you are going to stay,” said the workhouse woman in a confidential tone to Becky Dobbs, “I’ll just run and borrow a lighted match, for I hav’n’t a spark of fire, and he wants a drop of warm comfortable gruel.”—“Yes, Nanny! I’ll stay a bit,” she replied, “but make haste,” and then offering the only unbroken chair to Miss Vincent, Becky sat down on the edge of the bed. “Well, father, I hope you feel yourself better,” said the daughter, drawing her chair near the bed. The poor man turned his head, and looked at her, and began to weep. He did not speak, and she said, “Don’t you know me, father?” “Which of my poor girls are you?” he said, “but whichever you are, God bless you for coming to see me.”—“It’s Letitia,” she replied, “and Kitty would have come, but she is gone along with the family where she lives, to Ireland.” Her father did not notice what she said, his spasmodic

pains had seized him, and he halloed out with the violent agony he suffered, and then he poured forth so many loud and impious oaths, that his daughter started from her seat. "Oh shocking! dreadful! isn't it?" said old Becky, "For shame of you, Mr. Vincent, and have done with such bad words;" and then, turning to Miss Vincent, she said, "Poor thing! poor creature! he knows but little of what he says, when he is in those spasms. He's gone, quite gone in his senses now;—see how he rolls his eyes, and slavers with his lips; and now he is going to strike his hands about: hold him, Letty, hold his hand, and I'll get to that side of the bed, and hold the other. Well, he's quiet now; he's quieter than I thought, poor dear?"—"Some brandy and water, get me some brandy and water," cried the sick man, "or a drop of gin, but let it be neat. Will you get me some?" he said, in a low voice to his daughter, though it was plain enough he did not know her. "Bless you," said the old woman, in a loud whisper, when Miss Vincent turned to her, being about to beg her to go for what he required.—"Bless you, you must not give him a drop, for the life of you. The parish doctor was here not an hour ago, and he forbids us to give him a single drop; but he is going to send him something to still the pain." The woman from the workhouse had now returned, and old Becky had slipped away. "You will never make anything of that fire," said Miss Vincent, to the old woman, who was trying in

vain to produce a flame,—“here, my good woman, take this,” and she gave her a few shillings, “and get some coals and a faggot, and call at the doctor’s for the medicine for poor Mr. Vincent, and I will take your place till you return.” The daughter was left alone, and as she sat by the bedside of her wretched father, many thoughts of old times, and some struggles arose in her mind. The days of her childhood passed before her, and with almost every pleasant recollection, the image of her father was present. She remembered playing with the thick braids of gold-lace upon his coat, and his grand gold shoulder-knot; and smelling his beautiful nose-gay of sweet flowers, and riding upon his tall cane with its fine polished head; and she well remembered how fresh and smiling he used to look, and how he always brought her something good, a bit of sweet cake, or a burnt almond in his pocket; and that he always petted her more than her sister Kitty; and how she loved to sit on his knee, and to be asked to show her pretty red shoes, and to spread out her muslin frock, and her long blue sash, and to be called pretty Letty! and then she remembered how her mother and she had taken him for a gentleman, when he came on purpose to give them a surprise, out of livery, in such elegant clothes, to tell them that he was made head butler at a great lord’s, and that he had the care of all the wine, and sat and carved at the second table in that noble house, and that she gave him a little



bottle she had, to be filled with sweet wine ; and she remembered his bringing her a white beaver hat, with a plume of feathers in it, and saying that Kitty should have one another day. She remembered other days,—sad days of disgrace, days of intemperance, days of open ungodliness, days of brutal unkindness to her mother and sister Kitty, but she did not remember one moment of unkindness towards herself. Letty did not only look back upon former times ; she turned her gaze upon the present, upon the wretched chamber where she was sitting, the broken casement stuffed in places with rags, the filthy floor, with the wind blowing in cold draughts through the boards ; and then her eye rested upon the pale yet bloated countenance of the sick man. She had many struggles within her heart ; the last was the longest. Something seemed to whisper “you surely cannot leave him,” and then disgust and selfishness rose up and hardened her heart, and all her wish was to get away from that melancholy chamber at once. The workhouse woman returned, and with her a finely dressed, smooth-tongued person, the mistress of the Merry Drummer, once poor Vincent’s own house. Mrs. Stone was extremely polite,—begged to know Miss Vincent’s plans, proffered her own services—feared Miss Vincent must be in a hurry to go back to the great family with which she lived—perhaps had not more than an hour or two to stay, but if she could stay, a bed was quite ready for her at the

Merry Drummer—was sure she felt much for the poor old gentleman—had meant all the week to come and see him, but really the town was so full of company, and they had so much custom at their house, that what with one thing and another, she seldom got beyond the doors. Miss Vincent's tongue was now unlocked, and she poured forth the account of what *she* felt, what *she* suffered, what a trial it was to *her* poor nerves, never very strong, to see her father, poor unfortunate foolish man! brought to such a condition, but it was all his own fault, he had nobody to thank for his miseries but himself, well to do, as he once was. While Mrs. Stone was speaking, the struggle in Letty's heart had ended, and the enemy within her had conquered. "Her stay was obliged to be short," she said, (knowing all the while that she had a full week at her disposal, and feeling her cheeks glow with the lie she told,) "perhaps she might accept Mrs. Stone's polite offer of a bed just for one night, but, indeed, she felt it very bad for her to be with her father. Her feelings quite overcame her; she saw she was almost a useless creature, and he did not know her. Ever since the good woman had left the room, he had lain with his eyes open, and yet he took no notice of her. If she was obliged to go, would Mrs. Stone be so kind as to give a look to see that things were made comfortable?—She would pay whatever might be necessary," (and she drew forth a purse with sovereigns in it,) "but, indeed, it was shameful in

the parish, to let her find her father in such a state, and no one but that poor old creature to wait upon him. Did Mrs. Stone know of a nurse?" Mrs. Stone was just then called away, and Miss Vincent felt inclined to follow her, but she could not for very shame find it in her heart to go without looking once more upon her father's face. She drew near the bed, and as she looked at him, she saw, from the expression of his countenance, that he had again some bewildered recollections of her. She spoke a few words, hardly knowing what she said, and bending down, she arranged his bed-clothes and his pillow, and kissed him. "Nay, nay," he said, as she turned to leave the chamber, "don't be going, you must not go away from me;" she did not turn her head, but treading very lightly, she passed through the doorway, and began to descend the stairs; the sound of her own name from her father's lips stopped her, she could not go away till she had heard what he said: "Let her go," he said, "I knew it was not Letty, my own pretty Letty. She has a tender heart; she would not leave her dying father. If my poor Letty were to come, she would not go away; she always loved her father. They never wrote to Letty, and she'll break her heart, when she hears that I am dead, and she could not be with me."—Letty went back—her father knew her for a few minutes; then again his senses forsook him.—The excellent clergyman of the parish, who had attended him daily, came into

the wretched chamber just as the unconscious father expired in the arms of his daughter Letty."

Poor Vincent had been the servant of a careless dissipated master, in a household where there was no fear of God before his eyes; he found there a code of morals exactly calculated to confuse all good old notions of right and wrong, and well suited to his natural selfishness and love of self-indulgence. He soon learnt to find it pleasant to take what belonged to a master, and to be able to consider that doing so, was merely appropriating a perquisite, not committing a theft; perquisite, was indeed a most convenient name. It was a name by which conscience could be cheated or consent to be cheated when it asked troublesome questions. All the servants in the family were agreed as to what were perquisites and what were not. The master of the house knew nothing of the proceedings of his servants. It was not that he did not reside in the house; it was not that he was without the power of dismissing his servants, but he did not remember that he was a responsible person; he did not see what occasion there was for the master of a Christian household to be the father, and the friend, and the priest of his family. So that a certain portion of work was done, (and that portion was light in a family where there was less work than servants,) he was satisfied, particularly when the servants were well-dressed and respectfully civil to himself. He knew not, or cared not

how many of his household secured a per-centage from his tradesmen upon their bills, according to that too generally established system which has been well called 'a direct premium upon waste and dishonesty.' James Vincent had been a very fine-looking young man; his appearance and manners were equally pleasing and intelligent; he had a peculiar quickness and clearness in understanding clearly and doing well the trifling duties of his situation. He was in due time promoted to the place of head butler; but from a certain obtuseness of understanding, at times, not at all natural to him, and an occasionally flushed countenance, he was suspected of making too free with his master's cellar. Several years passed away, and on his master's changing his residence, it was necessary to remove the wine. It was then discovered that the well-stocked cellar had been almost emptied of its contents.\* The keys had been kept by Vincent, and his dishonesty and drunkenness were so clearly established, that he was at once dismissed in disgrace, and without a character from his service. Vincent, however, was not without resources. Like the Steward in the Parable, he had been wise in his generation, and had provided against the hour of need. Though without character, he was not without means. He left the part of the country where his master had resided, and established him-

\* A fact.

self as landlord of a public house, in the town of M——. There his business flourished for a time, but a dishonest man and a drunkard is never likely to succeed in any situation. Vincent sunk lower and lower in vice and disgrace, and his fate was that of many a faithless servant, in whose ruin, however, a careless and ungodly master has his full share.

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Mary Nugent remained but a few days at Somerton, and leaving her sister Caroline there, she returned to London. She may as well speak for herself, as she has done before, in her letter to her mother. "I once destroyed a long letter" (she wrote,) "which I had nearly finished, and was going to send you from Chesterton House. It was written in an unwise and repining spirit. I had taken my idea of the habits of a nobleman's household, from the habits of the family in which I then resided. How differently I could speak of the domestic habits of this house! What a dignified simplicity! what unaffected piety distinguish the Duke and Lady Bertha, and I may say the same of Lady Helen, who is younger than Lady Chesterton, but who is growing up with the same kind and gentle manners as her eldest sister. Dear mother, pray tell Caroline that I have seen Lady Bertha dressed for the Queen's drawing-room, and that, much as I admired her loveliness and grace, and the costly simplicity

of her dress, her outward adorning was scarcely observed, exceeded as it was by that modest and feminine sweetness, which agrees so well with the apostle's description of the real ornament of a Christian gentlewoman ; the meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. While I looked upon her, and remarked her serene and smiling countenance, it pleased me to consider, that all her jewels were, like the ornaments spoken of in the beautiful language of Scripture, figures and emblems of the loveliest graces of the renewed spirit, for she was far more glorious within."

## CHAPTER IV.

A LARGE family party assembled at the abbey soon after the return of the Duke and his daughters from their short sojourn in London. Colonel and Lady Grace Shirley, and their unmarried daughter, were among them ; and Mr. Herbert, having come unexpectedly into the neighbourhood had written to say that he should pay his friends a short visit before he returned to Hallowdine.

A few days after Lady Bertha's return from town, when the ladies were sitting together after dinner, the gentlemen not having left the dining-room, the conversation turned on an entertainment which had been lately given by a celebrated leader of fashion. Lady Honoria, who was very fond of that style of conversation which is called gossip, requested Lady Chesterton to give her a full account, and drank in with eagerness every detail. When she had heard all, she turned round upon



Lady Bertha, and said, "Well, dear child, how did you enjoy this superb entertainment?"—"I was not there, aunt," replied Lady Bertha, quietly. "Not there, child! and why not?"—"I received no invitation, nor do I know Lady Ellerton." "I am sure I should have managed to be there!" said Lady Honoria: "I have no doubt your sister Rosalind could have taken you."—"Rosalind was so kind as to offer to take me," replied Lady Bertha, "but I preferred going with my father and Julia to dine with your old friend, Lady Lucy Vernon. She had so many questions to ask about you, dear aunt! and she charged me with the expressions of her regret at not seeing you in town this season." "Ah! very kind;" replied the old lady; "she is an excellent woman, and a very dear friend of mine."—"She promised us," continued Lady Bertha, "to come to the abbey in a few weeks, that she might meet you here." "You are always kind, and thoughtful, and attentive, my sweet child," said Lady Honoria, smiling tenderly, "and there is no one like you. I only wish your head were not half turned by these new notions. You are sensible enough on most subjects. Come, tell the truth: I suspect you have been nowhere, except at the drawing-room. Tell me something about your parties, and about the opera."—Lady Bertha could not resist smiling. "I went to no grand parties," she replied, "though my father

and I were scarcely a day without seeing some of our friends." "But you do not seem to have entered into the gaieties of the season," said Lady Honoria.—"Into none of the dissipations, if you please," she replied: "substitute that word for gaieties. I love gaiety, in the real sense of that beautiful word."

"I often think," continued Lady Bertha, turning to Lady Grace Shirley, "how an increasing knowledge of Him, in whose presence is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore, weans the heart from what the worldly call pleasure. I was delighted with a passage in a book which Colonel Seymour gave to my cousin, Henry Shirley, when he went into the Guards last year. I cannot repeat the passage as it is written, but I remember what struck me. The book is a charming one, though its name is a Latin one, 'Religio Militis.' The passage I speak of is this, or something like it. The author speaks of having accompanied a friend of his to the theatre, who wished to take his son, a fine school-boy, to see a play of Shakspeare's acted. He talks of the pleasure with which he witnessed the boy's delight, and adds—'I well remember how, at his age, I had felt about a play of Shakspeare.' Between the play and the entertainment, he took a review from his pocket, which he had not opened before, and began to read it. This review contained copious extracts from the private correspondence of Cow-

per, and some account of the martyrdoms of Bradford, of Ridley, and of Latimer. I remember the passage that follows, for I learnt it word by word. 'Need I say,' he continues, 'how I felt; how that I wept inwardly, and blushed to my own self, as I read; how that I neither heard, nor saw, nor heeded, the afterpiece, at which the boy by my side was so naturally laughing. It is thus man is weaned from childish things; it is thus that, as we gaze steadily upon awful realities, the 'toy-taken fancy' is awakened from its dream, and trifles can charm no more.'

"Is not that passage worth attending to?" said Lady Bertha. "I know I felt the truth of it on looking back to my own feelings the last night I was at the opera. No one delights in fine singing more than I do, but I will never go again to that place. I made my resolution that very night, in my own opera-box: I have kept it since, and I hope to keep it as long as I live. That charming, light-hearted girl, Flora Hamilton, was with me; for her aunt, Lady Hamilton, had brought her to town for the first time. She was, then, indeed, just what she is now, one of the most artless persons I ever met with. You know what a charming way she has of speaking her mind, and you know how right-minded she is. I shall never forget her that night: the ballet had begun, and she had sat with her eyes rivetted on the brilliant scene, when suddenly I observed her face, her forehead, her

neck, crimsoned with blushes. She turned round to me, and fixed her modest eyes upon me, with a gaze of such reproachful earnestness, that I felt my own cheeks reddening with confusion. 'Is it possible,' she said, 'that you can sit and look upon such exposed indecent persons as those on the stage? I put it to your sense of common modesty, if this is a place for a Christian gentlewoman.' Her aunt, who is a shrewd, worldly woman, was evidently astonished at Flora's impetuosity. — 'My dear child!' she said; 'first of all, do not speak so loud, or in such an indignant tone; you will make us quite conspicuous if you do. Really, Flora, you have strange ideas. I dare say, Lady Bertha is like me, and has never thought there was a shadow of impropriety in looking at the ballet. To the pure all things, you know, are pure!' — 'Dear, dear aunt!' she replied, 'is it fair to apply that text of holy Scripture to such a display of indecency as this? Lady Bertha, where must our eyes be! and what must be our notions of purity, if we can see this indecent exhibition unmoved? We should turn away with disgust, if we were to see such sights as this in the common street: are they made less offensive, because they are set off by fine clothing (if clothing of any sort it can be called), and by sweet music, and by floods of light? and because there are hundreds to keep one in countenance? I hate affectation and mock modesty as heartily as any one, but (though it's a strong

word, I will say it) I am not a fool. I know right from wrong; and what is wrong is plain enough in this case. I wonder the ladies of England can submit to such an insult as this.' I saw that Lady Hamilton was thoroughly vexed with her honest-hearted niece; but she still smiled, and expostulated with her, and apologized to me. I told her the plain truth, however, when I confessed that, for the first time, my eyes were opened—that Flora had opened them—that I agreed with every word she had said—and that I wondered at myself, and at my former blindness. 'It may be true,' I said, 'that we sit and look upon such scenes as these without an impure feeling in our bosoms; but to what a pass of carelessness are we come! are we, indeed, in a right state, if we can witness such immodest exposures without shame and displeasure.' \* \*

Lady Chesterton had listened to her sister hitherto without speaking: now, however, she joined in the conversation, and agreed that the dancing at the opera-house was sometimes too bad. "But really, Bertha, you would leave one no amusements; you put a yoke upon the neck of all enjoyment." Lady Chesterton looked a little out of humour as she said this. Her sister spoke with more than her usual cheerfulness, as she replied, "Those are evidently under a kind of yoke, whose

\* This remark has been made before, and better expressed, by some other person.

question continually is, how much of the restraint of virtue may we escape from? how far may we go in this or that folly? or how near the territory of sinful indulgence? True liberty knows no such bondage. The question asked is in its nature, entirely different. It is 'What shall I render unto the Lord?'—not 'How far can I go without incurring his displeasure? What can I do in His delightful service? How may I best perform His will? spread His kingdom? recommend His joyful gospel?' No amusements, my Rosalind! You might as well accuse a person of forbidding another to slake his thirst with the living waters of a limpid fountain, because he condemned the unnatural thirst of the drunkard and his deep, intoxicating draughts. Indeed, I do not find fault with amusements which are pure and healthful in their character, and fitted to keep the mind in a pure and healthful tone. Have we not music, painting, books, gardens?—but it would be using mere common-place language, to go on to enumerate the many amusements which are at once innocent and delightful.

"I know very well," continued Lady Bertha, smiling archly, as her eyes met those of Lady Honoria, "that you inwardly condemn me for being ready to adopt the common cant of narrow-minded enthusiasts: I know, too, that among many religious persons, there is a love of exaggeration and extremes in religion. Now I do indeed, disclaim any approval of the follies or mistakes, even of the

most excellent. I remember hearing Mr. Herbert say, on one particular occasion, that he decidedly objected to those statements which do not keep close to Scripture ; and that he thought no good was ever done by exaggeration, by narrowed views, or morbid sentiments, or by presuming to distort the beautiful consistency of the word of God. Do not heed me, therefore, if I advance an opinion which is not in agreement with the counsel of Him from whom we Christians profess to learn our duty, nor would I ask you to look to the letter of one or two passages of Scripture. I would have you take the spirit of the whole Sacred Volume, the spirit that lives and breathes in every inspired page. Dearest Rosalind ! do not answer me by the idle speech of worldly opinion, but by ' the sound speech which cannot be condemned ' of the Word of God."

" Do you think, then," said Lady Grace, " that all the fashionable world can be expected to give up their amusements ? to shut up the opera-house ? and never to attend another ball ?" — " I do not think that we are to expect any thing of the sort," replied Lady Bertha, very mildly : " it would be, indeed, an extraordinary inconsistency, if such were to be the case. It would not only be affectation, but hypocrisy, if persons whose hearts and inclinations had no higher object than enjoying what the world can offer them, were to pretend a deadness to the world — if, while they dismissed the world from the house, they were to keep the world

in the heart. I cannot agree with the rigid censure that is passed upon them by too many religious persons. They are talked of, as if their vain and foolish, very foolish ways were, in fact, positive crimes. They are, however, I fear, too often the signs of a heart alienated from the life of godliness."



## CHAPTER V.

"True piety is cheerful as the day."

COWPER.

"WHAT does your Grace think about the question of reform?" said Lord Chesterton carelessly, as he threw down the newspaper, and rose up with an ill-repressed yawn from the vast bergère in whose depths he had been reclining. The day was not merely a rainy day, but a day of pouring rain, and there was no billiard table at the abbey. The Duke smiled, and felt disposed to avoid any reply that might lead to a discussion; for he saw that his son-in-law was in his usual mood of utter carelessness, and had scarcely a motive or a meaning in his question. He had at last found out, that good-humoured and amiable as Lord Chesterton might be, he was a mere trifle; but he saw that the intelligent eyes of his son, Lord Lorington, were fixed intently upon him; and turning over a few leaves of the book he was reading, he said, "I will give as my answer,

the advice of a very celebrated man : \* ‘ It is good not to try experiments in bodies politick, except the necessity be urgent, or the utility evident ; and to take good care, that it be the desire of reformation that draweth on the change, and not the desire of change that pretendeth the reformation.’ ” — “ Exactly what I think,” said Lord Chesterton ; “ so I do not give myself much concern on the subject. I see neither the necessity nor utility of my turning politician.” — “ Perhaps not, my dear Chesterton ! perhaps neither you nor I are exactly calculated to shine, or be very serviceable as politicians ; but we often give our votes on important occasions in the upper house, and ought you not to consider a little more seriously than you do the general aspect of public affairs. This is not an age in which we may indulge in a love of ease ; nor is our country a Castle of Indolence, of the inhabitants of which it may be said with impunity,

‘ Their only labour is to kill the time.’

It must be something worse than inconsistency, my dear Chesterton, for a man, to be the decided advocate in the Senate, of what we consider to be the most enlightened policy for the commonwealth, if in that domestic sphere, where he has the opportunity of putting in practice what he recommends, his practice is not in hearty agreement with his

\* Bacon.

principles. Such an inconsistent course reminds me of a remark made upon some celebrated statesman, that while he raised the most vehement cry for liberty in public, he was a most oppressive tyrant in his own house. Public honesty and uprightness are but the expansion of the same qualities in private life. Not that by saying this I would advocate the application of a narrowed policy to an expanded sphere of action: nor do I say that every one who may perform his duties admirably in the smaller sphere of domestic life, is fitted to occupy a place in the council of the nation. I do not say, for instance, that every good father and master would make a good statesman; but I do say that he cannot be a good statesman who is not also a good father and a good master. The aspect of the times is such that our own interest alone might rouse us to exert ourselves to know and to do our duty. But I may surely appeal to a far higher principle than that of interest or mere expediency. We do not merely belong to a commonwealth in which we are responsible members; we belong to the church of God, and as Christians we are each of us as the servants of that master in the sacred parable, to one of whom were entrusted five talents, to another two, to another one talent, that they might return the same with usury." — "I really think," said Lord Chesterton, "that your Grace would make 'bigots of us all. You are such an uncompromising advocate of what you may call religion, but which seems to

me something very like methodism. Why cannot a person be religious at proper times? There are surely times and seasons for every thing." The duke smiled, as he recognized in this remark the second-hand words of Lady Honoria, who had been holding forth in the same strain only the day before. "You shall hear my sentiments as to times and seasons," he replied, better expressed than in my own words; and taking a little book from the table before him, he added, "We all need to have such words as these constantly before us," and then read as follows—"It is not uncommon to hear persons in every rank of life speaking as if religion were a thing separate from duty; that is, as if it consisted in the belief of a proper creed, and in the performance of acts of mercy and charity; but that all the business of life was a hindrance to the proper spiritual practice of a christian man. So far, indeed, as religion consists in, or rather is to be acquired by reading God's word, and meditation thereon, so far is the business of life a hindrance to religion; but so, equally, is visiting the sick, or any other act of social intercourse with our fellow-creatures. We find a labourer hasting to get his daily task finished, in order that he may resume some other occupation which he calls more religious. He fancies that his religion has been left when he quitted his home and his Bible; and that he is not a religious man till he returns to it. The lawyer hastens to get through his causes, because he thinks

that a court of law is a place in which it is not possible to be religious : and the merchant leaves his counting-house to attend a committee of a society, supposing that the latter is the performance of a religious duty, which the former is not. But digging a field, pleading a cause, and sitting behind a counter, are as much religious duties to persons in those respective classes, as any other employments can be. Religion means a system of obligations, of bindings of man to God, and man to man ; the bands which hold are the ordinances of God's appointment : and every individual is religious or otherwise according as he sees God in the sphere in which he is moving, and fulfils to Him the purpose for which he was placed in it.' '\*

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Among the various portraits at the abbey was one of a Lady Honoria De Vere, who had been once the beauty and the wonder, not only of her family, but the higher circles in which she moved. Her grace and sweetness had made her a peculiar favourite with Queen Mary, the wife of William the Third, in whose reign she lived ; and many of the presents of her royal mistress to the fair and gentle maiden were still treasured. She had died, however, of the small-pox, at the early age of nineteen,

\* See " Social Duties on Christian principles," an admirable little volume.

and within a month of the time when she was appointed to be one of the Queen's maids of honour. The education of this Lady Honoria had been entrusted to a certain Dr. Brownlow, her father's chaplain; and Dr. Brownlow being a man of rare ability and piety, had entered upon his charge with such delight and assiduity, that his lovely pupil became not only well acquainted with the stores of classic learning, but with the far richer treasures of God's Holy Word.

The Lady Honoria, whose name has been often mentioned as the great aunt of Lady Bertha, had been named after her young and lovely ancestress, and, from a child she had grown up with an affection almost romantic for her character and portrait. Lady Bertha knew this perhaps better than any one else, for her excellent relation had held forth on the subject to her as long as she could recollect any thing. It happened that many chests of papers and books were sent by the Duke's orders to the Abbey, having been removed from an old family mansion belonging to the De Veres. In one of these chests were found several books and letters which had once been in the possession of the first Lady Honoria, and with them were some chair-covers of rich velvet, which had been embroidered, according to the written labels upon them, by Queen Mary and her Ladies. At Lady Bertha's request, this chest of treasures was presented to her aunt Lady Honoria, and the delight of the

old lady was very great. "Would you not like to look over these books, dear child?" she said to Lady Bertha, as she was showing the chair-covers to Lady Chesterton and Miss Shirley.—"I should indeed," replied Lady Bertha.—"Because you are aware, I suppose," said the old lady, "that my Lady Honoria's books are just what would suit you. Here are some of Mr. Herbert's favourites I see," said Lady Bertha, as she took up first one and then another volume; "here are 'Leighton's Works,' and here is 'Howe's Living Temple,' and 'Jeremy Taylor's Golden Grove,' and 'Dr. Owen on the Hundred and Thirtieth Psalm,' and 'The Pilgrim's Progress,' and 'Baxter's Saints' Rest.' Have you looked into any of these books, dear madam?"—"I have looked into many of them, I have indeed, my dear Bertha, and I hope I am the wiser and the better for so doing. There, there, you may go, if you wish to do so, ladies," she said, addressing herself to Lady Chesterton and Miss Shirley. "Leave this dear child with me;" and, so saying, she seated herself, and begged Lady Bertha to do the same. "Read aloud to me this passage," she said, "for I trust it has already, with God's blessing, been of much service to me."—"When we are content with duty instead of God, and had rather be at a sermon than in heaven; and a member of a church here than of that perfect church, and rejoice in ordinances, but as they are part of our earthly prosperity, this is a

sad mistake. So far let thy soul take comfort in ordinances as God doth accompany them with quickening, or comfort, or gives in Himself unto thy soul by them; but above all the plagues and judgments of God on this side hell, see that you watch and pray against this, of settling any where short of heaven, or reposing your soul to rest on any thing below God; or else, when the bough that you tread on breaks, and the things which you rest upon deceive you, you will perceive your labour all lost, and your sweetest contents to be preparative to your woe, and your highest hopes will make you ashamed.”\*—“Does not this apply too much to an old woman of your acquaintance, my Bertha? Ah, you do not care to answer yes, but I feel the likeness. To tell you the truth, I and my good friend Mr. Herbert have been talking about these subjects, and he has brought me over, old as I am, to esteem views and practices which I once felt heartily disposed to oppose wherever I met them—but here he comes;—Dear Mr. Herbert, my service to you, and how have you left your friend at the castle? or is my Lord Desmond come along with you to pass a few days among his old friends?”—“Old friends;” exclaimed Lady Bertha: “dear aunt, we have never seen Lord Desmond!”—“But he has seen you, child, though you were too young to notice

\* Baxter.



him. When he came here with his mother and aunt, it must be three-and-twenty years ago, you were perhaps about a year old. His mother was a Miss Middleton, a great beauty, and the daughter of a beauty—one almost as much celebrated as the Gunnings. I remember regretting that I did not see Mrs. Desmond the day she called.” — “Lord Desmond is here,” replied Mr. Herbert, “we came together, and I left him with the Duke.”

The young nobleman, of whom Mr. Herbert spoke, had just come into the possession of one of the finest properties of the county. He was the only son of a younger brother of the late Lord Desmond, and his father had been the valued friend of Mr. Herbert. Colonel Desmond had died in Spain, leaving his son under the guardianship of Mr. Herbert. Mr. Desmond had entered the army at an early age, and had possessed little fortune beyond his pay, till, by the unexpected death of his cousin and his uncle during the same year, he became Marquis of Desmond. His chief friend and adviser was his venerable guardian, and at his earnest desire, when he took possession of Desmond Castle, Mr. Herbert had accompanied him. He wished for his advice on many subjects, and always delighted in his society.

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Lady Bertha was deeply interested about the state of her sister, Lady Chesterton ; she saw, with real concern, the change that had taken place in her character and disposition, and she prayed that she might be instrumental in winning back her beloved Rosalind to the paths of pleasantness and peace. Although Lady Bertha was very mild and gentle, and although there was an appearance of strength and decision about the character of Lady Chesterton, the fact was, that Lady Bertha possessed a mind of real strength ; and the ascendancy she gained over those around her was not the less powerful because it was rather felt than known. Lady Chesterton had always been under the influence of this ascendancy, till her marriage with a man, whose weakness of mind was far greater than her own.

The society of her sister had the happiest effect on Lady Chesterton ; and the prayers, which she never ceased to offer, seemed not to have been offered in vain. "You seldom or ever speak to me on our old subject of worldliness," said Lady Chesterton one morning, when the two sisters were sitting together.—"Because," replied Lady Bertha, "I began to think that you were rather wearied than convinced by anything I could say on the subject, nor do I think that argument is profitable to us, if we make up our mind beforehand to submit in judgment and not in will."—"And you believe me," said Lady Chesterton, "to possess

such a determined will, that supposing I were convinced in my judgment, it might be said of me—

‘ She that’s convinced against her will,  
Is of the same opinion still.’

Am I so very hopeless, dearest Bertha?” Lady Bertha perceived, with delight, the unconstrained and natural manner in which her sister spoke; it reminded her of Rosalind, unworldly and unspoiled. “I take you at your word, my own Rosalind,” she said, with a smile of affectionate tenderness, and I will open this book which I had closed when you came to me. We will converse together on what you just now called our old subject of worldliness. We will bring the habits and manners of the worldly to the test of God’s own word: ‘This is Messiah’s world;’ and He who has redeemed it at so costly a price, has every claim upon our love, our grateful and adoring love. I feel this, Rosalind. I have a solemn vow upon me, to live to Him, and to keep his commandments.”—“A vow, a solemn vow,” repeated Lady Chesterton; “what new proceeding is this? when and where did you make this vow?” Lady Bertha replied, very quietly. “At my baptism.” A sound, very like Pshaw! murmured on the lips of Lady Chesterton. “At your baptism? is that all?”—“The power of a law is not the less for being disregarded,” replied Lady Bertha, “while the law itself continues unrepealed; nor is a vow the less binding upon the faithful, be-

cause the faithless break and forget it.”—“Oh ! when you talk of laws and vows,” cried Rosalind, “I have done. Dear Bertha ! why be so very solemn ?” —“Was I so very solemn ?” she replied ; and a smile played over her sweet countenance, “still solemn subjects should not be lightly treated ; you have not answered me yet,” she continued ; “am I so very solemn ?”—“No,” said Rosalind, pausing thoughtfully on the word ‘no :’—now I come to consider, you are not at all a solemn sort of person, but very cheerful and very charming. In fact, your spirits are the most even I ever met with. Still, your new opinions command you to be very dull and grave, do they not ?”—“They are not new opinions, but as old as the Bible, dear Rosalind ; and, secondly, the command we are all called upon to obey is this : ‘Rejoice, and again I say unto you, rejoice ;’ the believer is filled with joy and peace in believing—his piety is cheerful as the day.”—“The world, or I would say, the worldly, seem to agree in deciding, that religion is a very dull and gloomy affair,” said Lady Chester-ton ; “and I must confess, from my own experience, that I have never found it otherwise. You see, Bertha, I am speaking without any reserve to you.”—“Answer me this question, however, if you can do so satisfactorily,” said Lady Bertha, “Do not the world insist on seeking happiness by the broad way, and through the wide gate, which God has forewarned them can lead only to destruc-

tion ; and are we not told by Him to strive to enter into life by a straight gate and a narrow way ? Who is likely to be right, God or man ? Is our Father in heaven to blame, if many of his creatures find no happiness in His holy ways, when in fact they do not chuse to seek those ways, or to walk in them ? Hear, my sister, what our great high priest and mediator says on the subject of the world," and as she said this Lady Bertha opened the Bible.— "It is at the fourth chapter of the Epistle of St. James, the fourth verse, 'Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God : whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.'"—"Yes, yes," replied Lady Chesterton, "but the world there spoken of was the heathen world ; we are not now a small church of Christians in the midst of a nation of unbelieving Gentiles or persecuting Jews."—"Alas ! my dear Rosalind, our state is, I fear, still more awful, if, instead of professing to be heathens, we profess to be disciples of Christ, and so receive the Kingdom of God in word but not in power ; profess to know Him, while in our works we deny Him. You remember our Lord's account of the two sons ;—to one of whom their father said, 'Son, go work to-day in my vineyard ;' and he said, 'I will not,' but afterwards he repented and went ; while the other said, 'I go sir,' but went not. You remember what our Lord said of those among whom he did many wonderful works. 'Not every one that saith

unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess to them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' If it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for those places, where Jesus Himself, who spake as never man spake, preached the Gospel, that Gospel of love and peace and joy; what will be said of our professing nation, blest as we are with the noontide glory of the new covenant? When our Lord spoke those words he was the man of sorrows in His humiliation; the Holy Spirit was not yet given, or rather poured out, or, I should say, the third person in the eternal Godhead had not come into world in the place of the despised Redeemer. He had not come to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and to remain as the Comforter, for Jesus was not yet glorified. My dear sister, the world in which we abide may have a name to live, but so had the church of Sardis, of whom our Lord said, 'Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead.' My Rosalind, how shall we answer if we know these things, if we know also that there is for us a great day of account? if we know these things, our Lord says, happy are we if we do them. All

through the Bible I see no word in praise of riches or high rank. I certainly do not find that it is any crime to be rich and noble in worldly station, if such be the calling, in which it has pleased God to place us ; but I do find that, although God has made many unequal as to the things of time and sense, He has provided richly for them in the things of eternity and in spiritual treasures. There are, however, many warnings to the rich and noble. Do you remember our Lord's own words : ' How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God.' St. Paul, too, when he introduces the Gospel of Christ crucified to the Corinthians, says expressly, ' Not many mighty, not many noble are called.' We know this, my dear sister, and we know that ' she who liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth ; ' and if the world chooses to condemn a decided separation from the evil that is in the world, we must not mind it. We ought not to endeavour to make ourselves of any consequence, or to be particular in trifles, or to condemn any thing that is true, and pure, and lovely, and of good report ; but we must ' come out of the sins of the world if we would not be partakers of its plagues.' I know that many will strain at a gnat who can swallow a camel ; but, for my part, I am ready to swallow the gnat when it seems advisable to do so. And now, dear Rosalind, what more must I say, or what judgment do you pass ?"

Lady Bertha looked full in her sister's face, and she gazed upon the soft, modest eyes ; the clear, open brow, the lips still parted, on which their expression of purity and innocence seemed so natural, and she replied — “ ‘ Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep ‘ herself ’ unspotted from the world.’ You have shewn me this, not by the argument of your words (yet your words are full of truth and wisdom), — the silent argument of humility, and goodness, and sweetness — that is the convincing argument. To adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour — that is the way of true wisdom, for it winneth souls. Yes, Bertha, she that winneth souls by the silent scriptures of her own life is indeed wise. Take me as your pupil, my Bertha ; you will ; for you are my eldest sister, teach me in your own sweet way. I know that I need higher teaching, but it has already pleased God to make you the instrument of that higher teaching to me. Besides, He giveth grace to the humble, to such as you are, and seek to be ; He giveth grace not only for their own use, but for the edifying of others.” Rosalind’s eyes were full of tears, and her gentle sister drew her arm around her neck ; and, though her tears fell too, she smiled through them, “ You are a dangerous person, my Rosalind,” she said, “ though I am sure you do not mean those affectionate words as flattery, I feel them to be



something very like it, and there is no such danger in any words as in words of flattery. Do not tell me I am humble, I entreat you ! It is the hardest task I ever undertake, to be so — it is the most difficult grace to possess —

‘ And she who ventures to esteem it hers,  
Proves by that very thought, she has it not.’ ”

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Mary Nugent was very happy at the Abbey. She soon learnt that the chief employment of Lady Bertha's maid was to make clothes for the poor, and to accompany her lady in her visits to their cottages ; and she soon found herself treated by Lady Bertha with the kindness and confidence of a friend. It was, therefore, not without regret that she found herself summoned to leave her pleasant service, though her invitation was to Somerton, and the letter she received was from her mother. This letter was full of news. It announced to her the deaths of her dear and aged grandmother, and that of her aunt, Mrs. Carrington. The letter informed her also that her sister Caroline was quite recovered ; and that Emily, her eldest sister, had given up the charge of Mrs. Shirley's children, and was then with her cousin, Jane Carrington. The fortune which Mrs. Carrington had left was larger than any one had expected ; the chief part of it came to her daughter, but to each of her three

nieces, and to their brother William, she had left a legacy of two thousand pounds, and a still larger sum to their mother, Mrs. Nugent.

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“ Pray tell me, Harry, what makes you so absent in your manner to-day ?” said Mr. Herbert, to his young friend, Lord Desmond. “ I suspect you find your own house a little dull after your visit to the abbey.” The two gentlemen had returned to Desmond Castle that evening, and they were sauntering up and down one of the broad terrace walks in the old fashioned garden. “ I have no reserves with you, my dear sir,” said Lord Desmond, “ and I will tell you candidly what I am thinking of ; it is this, that your lovely friend, Lady Bertha de Vere, is, without exception, the sweetest creature I ever beheld.”—“ Of course she is,” replied Mr. Herbert. “ Did I not tell you as much before you saw her ?” —“ Yes, I know you did, my dear sir, but I was strangely prejudiced against her ; I imagined that it would be considered a sin to smile in her presence. What a charming creature she is ! I have observed her narrowly, and yet I hardly knew at the time that I was doing so, but I observed that she condemned no one, judged no one, made uncharitable remarks on no one who differed from herself, was unassuming and unpretending, and only claimed for herself the same liberty which she never seemed inclined to deny to others.

“It is an extraordinary fact, sir, that in the purest and most evangelical church, the Church of England, a sort of obloquy should attach to the character of such a person as Lady Bertha de Vere. I have no doubt, nay, we both know it to be a fact, that by many high principled and excellent members of the Church of England, she is deemed an enthusiast, or fanatic, a mystic: I need not enumerate the absurd names. Had she lived in former ages, she would have been highly regarded; had she been even a member of the Church of Rome, her piety and her simplicity would have been understood and appreciated. Had our poets seen her, Spencer, for instance, might have caught from her the idea of Una's character. His

‘Heavenly Una with her milkwhite lamb;’

or Milton might have written to her that noble sonnet,

‘Lady that in the prime of early youth.’

But those ages are past,” said Mr. Herbert, “and as Lady Bertha lives in this age of pretended liberality and refinement, because she loves to search the scriptures daily; because she is too honest a member of the Church of England to profess to renounce the pomps and vanities of the foolish world, and not to realize her profession; because she does not choose to waste her time and ruin her constitution, by hurrying night after night from one

heated and crowded room to another, in London ; because she does not think that a Christian lady can be too careful to keep up that shame-facedness and feminine delicacy which belong to her calling, —she is looked upon by many as a narrow-minded fanatic. Those, however, are not well acquainted with her, who call her melancholy and a methodist ; all who know her well, say, as we can say, that she is one of the most delightfully cheerful persons they ever beheld ; and is not this a proof that her personal character has some true likeness to the Holy Religion we profess ? Do not the world deem the faith of Christ melancholy and cheerless, but do not all who have any thing like a real and intimate acquaintance with it, describe it thus : ‘ A peace which the world cannot give ; a hope that maketh not ashamed ; a joy with which the stranger intermeddleth not ;’ nay, will they not say, it is peace in agony, hope in the heaviest glooms, and joyful life even in death ?

“ You speak of Lady Bertha,” continued Mr. Herbert, “ as one whom poets would have loved to celebrate ; but allow me to remark, (and I who have known her from her infancy ought to know her,) that she has more of the prose of good sense about her character, than any one I ever met with. She has no flightiness of imagination about her, but a plain consistency ; no visionary enthusiasm, but a refined sobriety ; Lady Bertha has nothing of what is called romantic in her character ; she is

neither sentimental nor fanciful, but her goodness is practical ; her manners to every one, frank, affectionate, and humble. She has read the Bible with the sincere and simple intention of bringing its doctrines into her daily practice ; and those who object to her pure and pious life, are, in fact, objecting to practical godliness ; they are, in fact, declaring that the Bible is not a practical book ; that its wisdom is not practical wisdom ; in short, that its doctrines are not written to teach practical godliness, and that its faith is not to be evidenced by its fruitfulness ; now I do maintain, that the spirituality of mind, to which we are exhorted in the Word of God, can only be shewn in spirituality of life."

THE END.



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